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NEWS

Apr 15, 2023

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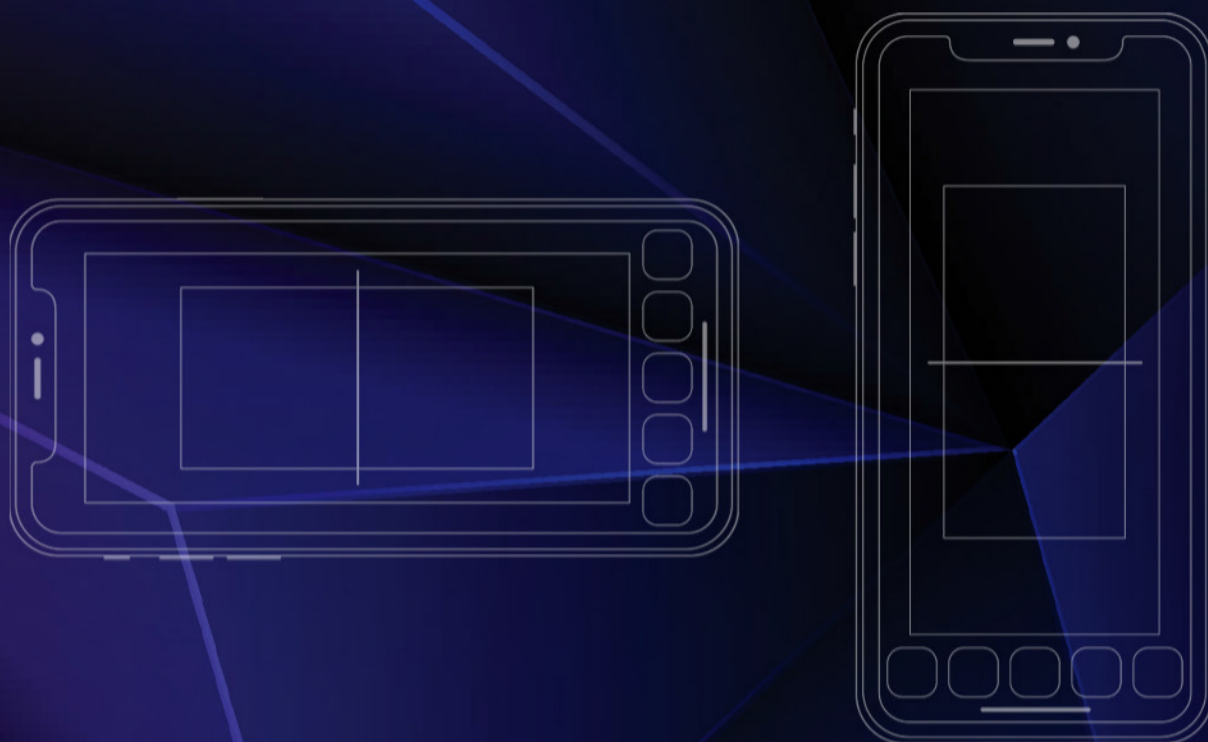




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SUMMARY

AMAZON'S JASSY SAYS AI WILL BE A 'BIG DEAL' FOR COMPANY	06
NEW STREAMING APP TO 'MAX' PROGRAMMING FROM HBO, DISCOVERY	16
US WHOLESALE INFLATION PRESSURES EASED SHARPLY LAST MONTH	32
US JOBLESS CLAIMS RISE BUT REMAIN AT HISTORICALLY LOW LEVELS	42
WHY ARE THERE SO MANY GOOD TV SHOWS TO WATCH RIGHT NOW?	50
IOS 17 TO BRING MAJOR CONTROL CENTER REDESIGN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS	66
NEXT GEN - EDGE COMPUTING: THE NEXT STEP IN APPLE'S DEVELOPMENT	76
MUSK SAYS OWNING TWITTER 'PAINFUL' BUT NEEDED TO BE DONE	98
POLL: 4 IN 10 SAY NEXT VEHICLE MAY BE ELECTRIC	108
ROBOT POLICE DOG RETURNS TO NYPD DESPITE EARLIER CRITICISM	120
2023 VOLVO XC40 RECHARGE VS. AUDI Q4 E-TRON	126
BOEING SEES AIRPLANE DELIVERIES JUMP ON RETURN OF THE 787	138
BIDEN ADMINISTRATION SEEKS INPUT ON AI SAFETY MEASURES	142
BUFFETT SAYS PEOPLE SHOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT BERKSHIRE, BANKS	148
'THE SUPER MARIO BROS. MOVIE' IS OKEY-DOKEY	156
CISCO STILL FACES CASTE BIAS SUIT; ENGINEERS' CASE DISMISSED	170
HOME-BASED WORKERS BECAME YOUNGER, MORE DIVERSE IN PANDEMIC	178
CAN THERAPY HELP MAKE YOU RICHER?	186
MONEY: HOW TO PROTECT PARENTS FROM FINANCIAL SCAMS	196





AMAZON'S JASSY SAYS AI WILL BE A 'BIG DEAL' FOR COMPANY

Amazon CEO Andy Jassy signaled confidence that the company will get costs under control in his annual shareholder letter, where he also noted the tech giant was “spending heavily” on AI tools that have gained popularity in recent months.

In the letter, Jassy described 2022 as “one of the harder macroeconomic years in recent memory” and detailed the steps Amazon had taken to trim costs, such as shuttering its health care initiative Amazon Care and some stores across the country. The company had also slashed 27,000 corporate roles since the fall, marking the biggest rounds of layoffs in its history.



am

The image shows a close-up of a smartphone screen displaying the Amazon logo. The logo consists of the word "amazon" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font, with a yellow curved arrow underneath the letters "a" and "z". The phone is black, and the background is a dark blue with out-of-focus, colorful bokeh lights in shades of red, orange, and yellow.

amazon

“There are a number of other changes that we’ve made over the last several months to streamline our overall costs, and like most leadership teams, we’ll continue to evaluate what we’re seeing in our business and proceed adaptively,” Jassy wrote.

The company’s profitable cloud computing unit Amazon Web Services also faces “short-term headwinds right now,” despite growing 29% year-over-year in 2022 on a \$62 billion revenue base, Jassy wrote. He noted challenges for the unit stem from companies spending more cautiously in the face of challenging current macroeconomic conditions.

Despite the cuts and “turbulent” times, Jassy said he strongly believes Amazon’s “best days are in front of us.”







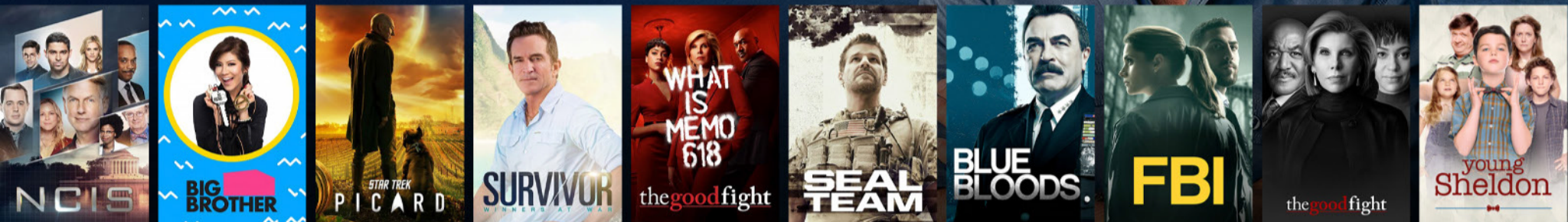
The Seattle company will continue to invest in specialized chips most used for machine learning, its advertising business as well as generative AI tools. The tools are part of a new generation of machine-learning systems that can converse, generate readable text on demand and produce novel images and video based on what they've learned from a vast database of digital books and online text.

"Let's just say that LLMs and Generative AI are going to be a big deal for customers, our shareholders, and Amazon," Jassy wrote, using the abbreviated version of Large Language Models, or AI that can mimic human writing styles based on data they've ingested.

On Thursday, Amazon also announced several new services that will allow developers to build their own AI tools on its cloud infrastructure.

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NEW STREAMING APP TO 'MAX' PROGRAMMING FROM HBO, DISCOVERY

Warner Bros. Discovery unveiled a streaming service Wednesday combining iconic HBO programming such as "The Sopranos" with a mix of unscripted TV series in a push to reap more subscribers from what so far has been a muddled media merger.

The \$16-per-month service, called Max, will be released May 23 in the U.S. and automatically replace the company's existing HBO Max service in what is being promised as a seamless transition. Max will gradually become available in the rest of the world, with Latin America next up on the slate.







**WARNER BROS.
DISCOVERY**



discovery+

sonmax

The existing Discovery Plus app featuring reality and unscripted series such as “Fixer Upper” and “Naked and Afraid” from a collection of TV networks will continue to be offered. That’s even as all that programming is made available within the new Max app, which will be marketed with the tagline “The One To Watch.”

When the deal was announced in 2021, Warner Bros. Discover CEO David Zaslav envisioned it creating “the best media company in the world” backed by a vast library of movies, TV series, documentaries and children’s programming. The goal was to stand out among an array of streaming options competing for subscribers at a time many households are trimming discretionary spending amid stubbornly high inflation.







**WARNER BROS
DISCOVERY**



With Max now on the verge of rolling out, Zaslav said he still sees big things ahead.

“This is our rendezvous with destiny,” he declared during a presentation in the same studio where movies such as “Casablanca” and “A Streetcar Named Desire” were made. Those movies, as well as other Warner Bros. films, will be available in Max, which Zaslav hailed as “the streaming version of must-see TV.” Zaslav hinted that live sports events and news will be added to Max before the end of the year.

Given that the Max app will bring more pedestrian programming from the Discovery networks alongside the boundary-breaking series that have been HBO’s hallmark, Warner Bros. Discovery executives periodically emphasized HBO would remain the same groundbreaking network that recently caused a stir with the series “The Last of Us,” and is currently making waves with the final season of “Succession.”

Toward that end, the company said it would be announcing another offshoot of its most watched series, "Game of Thrones," and is developing a new live-action "Harry Potter" series featuring a different cast from the popular film franchise based on the books by J.K. Rowling.

Warner Bros. Discovery is hoping the Max app helps turn the tide after a year of turbulence.

Since taking over the combined company, Zaslav has been shedding thousands workers and slashing other expenses to cope with the roughly \$50 billion debt that the company took on largely because of the merger. The cost cutting included a decision to pull the plug on CNN's streaming service a month after its launch in a move that quickly raised doubts about whether the Warner Bros. Discovery deal would turn out to be a flop.





HBO 

max

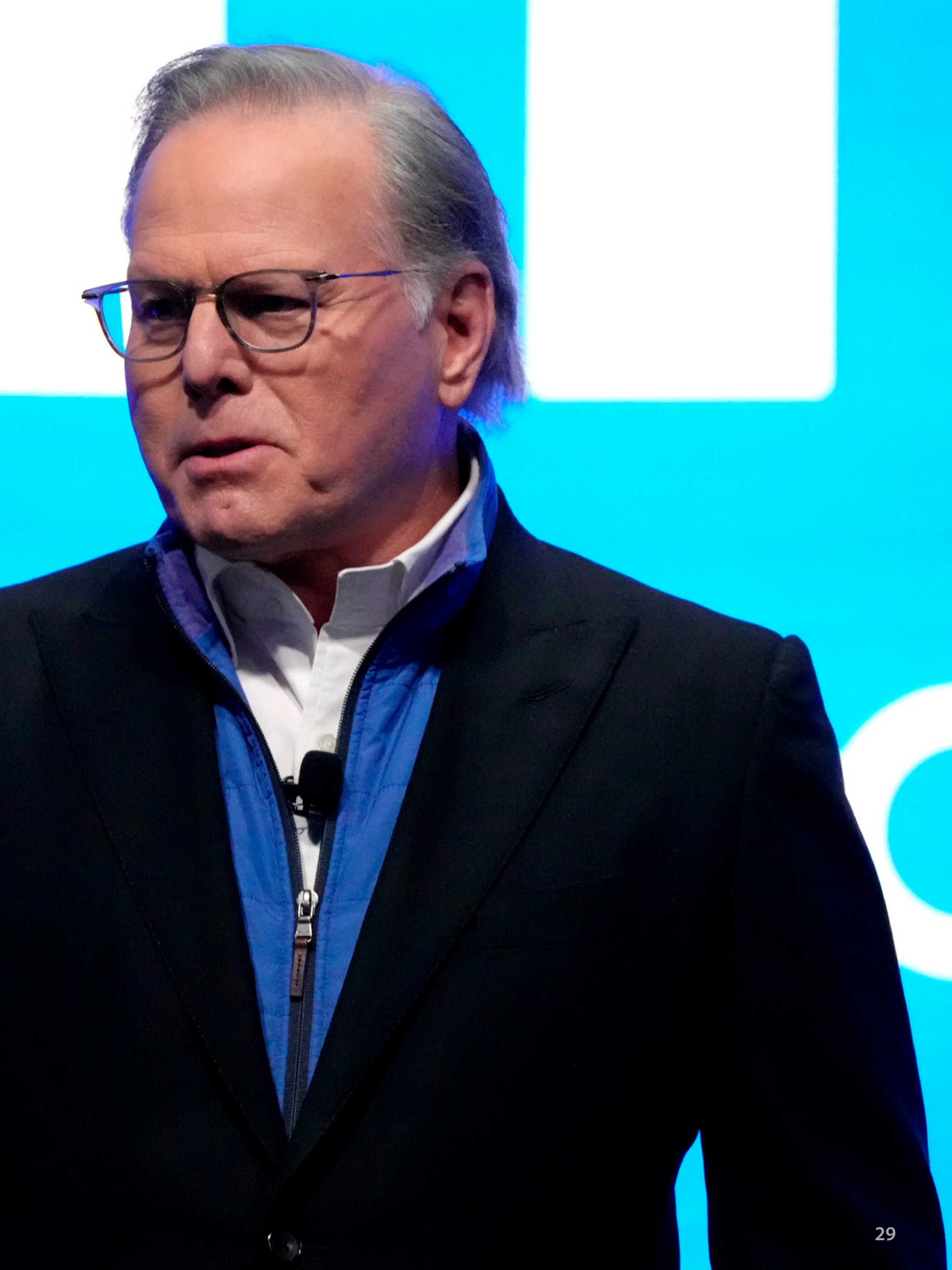
The ongoing skepticism has been reflected in New York-based Warner Bros. Discovery's stock price, which has dropped by more than 40% since the merger's completion, including further erosion Wednesday that occurred after the company laid out its plans for the Max app.

Shares in Netflix, the world's top streaming services, have fallen by 7% during same stretch amid concerns about its own slowing growth, which included a loss of 920,000 subscribers in the U.S. and Canada territory in 2022 that represents its biggest market.

Netflix, which ended last year with 231 million worldwide subscribers, is just one of a bevy of deep-pocketed streamers that the new Max app will be competing against. Other notables include Apple, Amazon, and Walt Disney Co., which offers apps for Hulu TV and ESPN in addition to Disney Plus.

The stiff competition prompted Netflix to introduce a lower-cost streaming plan that includes ads, an option that Max will offer for \$10 per month for viewers willing to tolerate periodic commercial interruptions.








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A black SUV is shown from a front-three-quarter view, parked on an orange hydraulic car lift in a factory setting. The car's hood is open, and its distinctive kidney grille is visible. In the background, another car is partially visible on a higher lift, and the industrial environment with white walls and metal structures is apparent.

US WHOLESALE INFLATION PRESSURES EASED SHARPLY LAST MONTH

U.S. wholesale prices fell in March, a sign that inflationary pressures in the economy are easing more than a year after the Federal Reserve began aggressively raising interest rates.

Plunging energy prices pulled the government's producer price index down 0.5% from February to March; it had been unchanged from January to February. Compared with a year ago, wholesale prices were up 2.7% in March — the mildest 12-month increase since January 2021 and down significantly from a 4.7% annual rise in February.

The Labor Department's producer price index reflects prices charged by manufacturers, farmers and wholesalers. It can provide an early sign of how fast consumer inflation will rise.

A huge drop in wholesale gasoline accounted for much of the sharp slowdown in producer prices. But even excluding volatile food and energy prices, so-called core wholesale inflation fell 0.1% in March, the first such drop in nearly three years. The Fed and many private economists regard core prices as a better gauge of underlying inflation. Core wholesale inflation was up just 3.4% from March 2022, the lowest year-over-year rise since 2021.

Behind last month's drop in core prices was a sharp decline in wholesale costs for warehousing and transportation. Overall services prices fell 0.3%, the first such drop since November 2020.

Household appliance prices fell 1.4%, car prices 0.3%. But wholesale food prices rose 0.6%, including a 34% jump in egg prices.

Wholesale inflation has come down steadily — from a record 11.7% year-over-year increase





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**CLEANS & HYDRATES SCALP
CONTROLS FLAKES & ITCH****

in March 2022 — since the Fed began raising its benchmark interest rate to fight the worst inflation bout in four decades. Beginning in March of last year, the Fed has raised its key short-term rate nine times and is expected to do so again at its next meeting, May 2-3.

“We expect the bite from the Fed’s previous rate hikes will further reduce business and consumer demand, pushing producer price inflation lower throughout the rest of the year, economists Matthew Martin and Ryan Sweet of Oxford Economics wrote in a research note.

Thursday’s figures follow a report Wednesday that showed that U.S. consumer inflation eased in March, with less expensive gas and food providing some relief to Americans. Still, consumer prices continue to rise fast enough to keep the Fed on track to further raise rates.

Core consumer inflation, in particular, remains stubbornly high. Measured year over year, core prices are up 5.6%, far above the Fed’s 2% inflation target. The year-over-year core consumer inflation figure rose in March for the first time in six months.

The collapse last month of two major U.S. banks, which shook the financial industry, has complicated the Fed’s interest rate decisions. Minutes of the Fed’s March meeting, which followed the bank failures, show that the turmoil led the central bank to coalesce around a decision to raise its benchmark rate by just a quarter-point, rather than a half-point.

According to the minutes, Fed officials agreed that the banking industry’s troubles “would likely lead to some weakening of credit conditions,” as banks sought to preserve







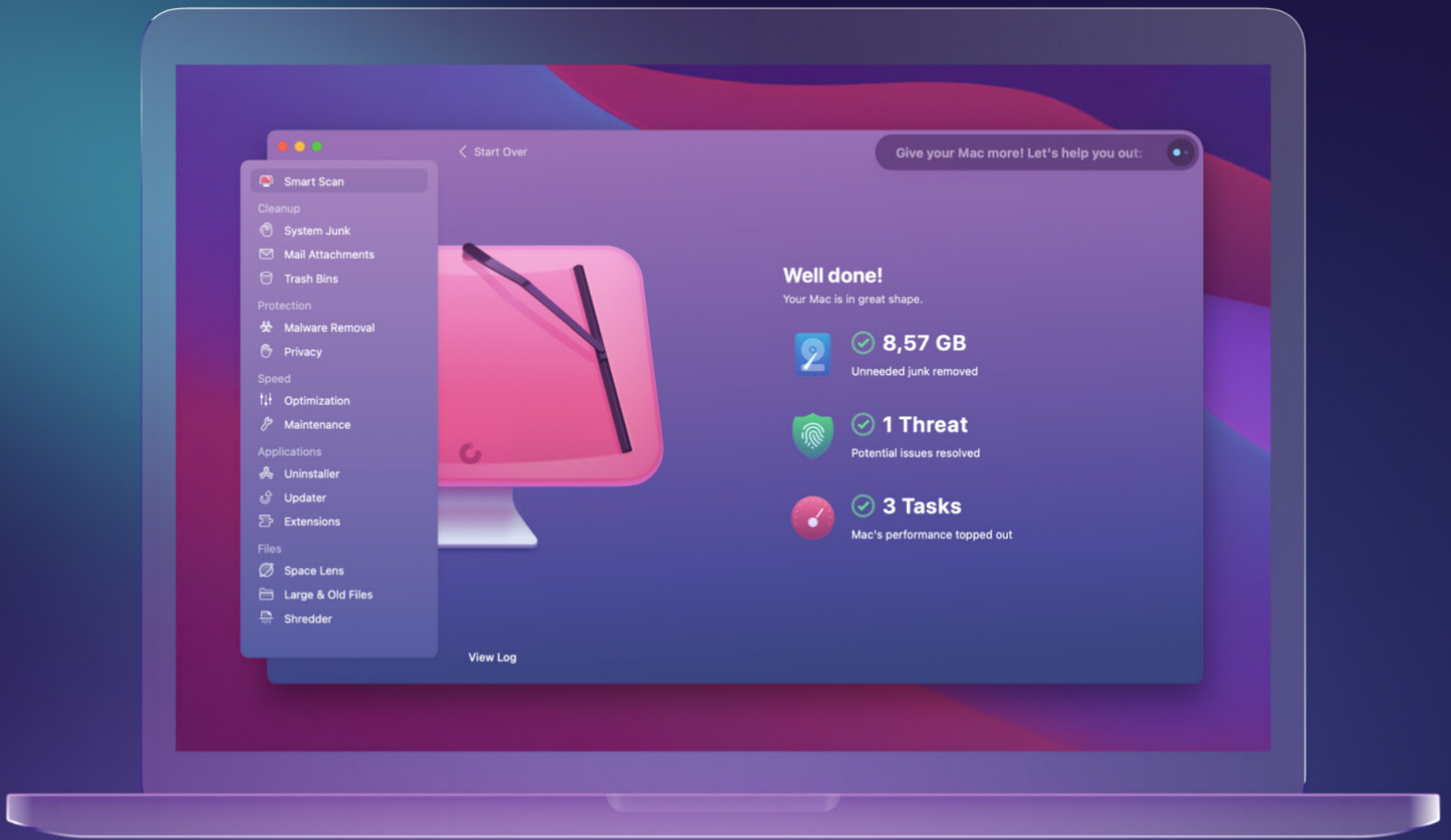


capital by curtailing lending to consumers and businesses.

Fed officials who spoke this week have emphasized the importance of monitoring bank lending. There are already reports of small companies struggling to obtain loans, though it's not yet clear how widespread the impact will be.

On Wednesday, the Fed also revealed that its staff economists have forecast that a pullback in bank lending will cause a "mild recession" starting later this year. That was a shift from their previous estimates, which had predicted that the economy would eke out positive growth for 2023.

At the same time, according to the minutes of last month's Fed meeting, if the impact of the banking turmoil ends up being less than expected, a recession might be avoided.



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A photograph of three men walking from left to right. The man in the foreground is wearing a brown t-shirt and blue jeans with a red tag. The man in the middle is wearing a black puffer jacket and blue jeans. The man in the background is wearing a dark jacket and glasses. They are walking past a wall with posters, including one that says 'TED'S BULL' and another that says 'NOV'.

US JOBLESS CLAIMS RISE BUT REMAIN AT HISTORICALLY LOW LEVELS

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U.S. applications for jobless benefits rose to their highest level in more than a year, but remain at relatively low levels despite efforts by the Federal Reserve to cool the economy and job market in its battle against inflation.

Jobless claims in the U.S. for the week ending April 8 rose by 11,000 to 239,000 from the previous week, the Labor Department said Thursday. That's the most since January of 2022 when 251,000 people filed for unemployment benefits.

The four-week moving average of claims, which evens out some of the week-to-week fluctuations, rose by 2,250 to 240,000. That's the most since November of 2021.

Last week, the Labor Department unveiled revised estimates of the number of weekly applications for jobless benefits under a new formula it is using to reflect seasonal adjustments. The new formula, which led to an increase in its weekly tally, is intended to more accurately capture seasonal patterns in job losses.

Applications for unemployment benefits are broadly seen reflective of the number of layoffs in the U.S.

The job market seems to be finally showing some signs of softening, more than a year after the Federal Reserve began an aggressive campaign to cool inflation by raising its benchmark borrowing rate nine times in about a year.

America's employers added a solid 236,000 jobs in March, suggesting that the economy remains on solid footing despite the nine interest rate hikes the Federal Reserve has imposed over the past year in its drive to tame inflation. The unemployment rate fell to 3.5%, just above the 53-year low of 3.4% set in January.





In its latest quarterly projections, the Fed predicts that the unemployment rate will rise to 4.5% by year's end, a sizable increase historically associated with recessions.

Also last week, the Labor Department reported that U.S. job openings slipped to 9.9 million in February, the fewest since May 2021.

Some details from Friday's Labor Department report raised the possibility that inflationary pressures might be easing and that the Fed might soon decide to pause its rate hikes. Average hourly wages were up 4.2% from 12 months earlier, down sharply from a 4.6% year-over-year increase in February.

Also Thursday, the government reported that wholesale prices fell sharply in March. One day earlier, the government said consumer prices rose just 0.1% from February to March, down from 0.4% from January to February and the smallest increase since December. However, prices are still rising fast enough to keep the Federal Reserve on track to raise interest rates at least once more, beginning in May.

Layoffs have been mounting in the technology sector, where many companies hired aggressively during the pandemic. IBM, Microsoft, Salesforce, Twitter and DoorDash have all announced layoffs in recent months. Amazon and Facebook have each announced two sets of job cuts since November.

About 1.81 million people were receiving jobless aid the week that ended April 1, a decrease of 13,000 from the week before. That number is close to pre-pandemic levels.





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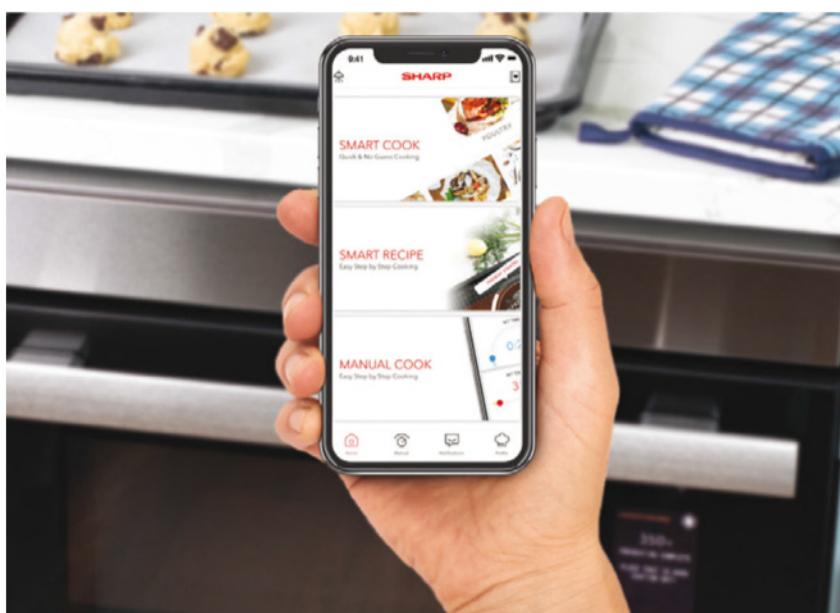
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WHY ARE THERE
SO MANY GOOD
TV SHOWS
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RIGHT NOW?







Picture May 17, 2001. In the final seconds of the season seven finale of “Friends,” Jennifer Aniston’s Rachel reveals she’s pregnant — but who’s the father? This was a classic May sweeps cliffhanger, luring viewers and reaping advertising dollars for NBC.

Most shows used to kick off in the fall, air big episodes in November and February, and go out with a bang in May. Baby announcements, marriage proposals and sudden deaths were just a few of the popular plot twists used in spring season finales to hook viewers and build anticipation for the fall season.

Network television still largely follows that model, but the streamers and premium cable competitors of the new guard tend to operate with different goals. Rather than angling for ratings, those companies are releasing new seasons of popular TV shows — “Ted Lasso,” “Succession,” “The Mandalorian,” “The Last of Us,” and “Yellowjackets” — with an eye to Primetime Emmy Award recognition.

Everyone wants to be fresh in the minds of voters, said Joyce Eng, a senior editor of the Hollywood awards-centric website Gold Derby.

“A lot of networks, streamers and campaigners will capitalize on recency bias,” she said.

For a TV series to be eligible for a Primetime Emmy, it must air between June 1 and May 31 of the following year. Six episodes of a returning season need to air by May 31 to qualify for a series category. The cast and crew then cross their fingers for nominations, which this year will be announced July 12, followed by the Emmy telecast on September 18, when the awards are handed out.









Limited series have to air all their episodes by May 31 in order to be eligible for nomination. In March, Amazon Prime's highly anticipated "Daisy Jones & The Six" dropped its 10 episodes in four batches.

It can be a scramble for show to finish by the end of May: "Ted Lasso" on Apple TV+ drops its final episode of season three, and maybe the entire series, on May 31. The fifth and final season of "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" returns on Amazon on April 14 and swiftly wraps by May 26.

If a returning series does not release six episodes of its season by the May 31 deadline, the remaining "hanging" episodes can be nominated in categories that only require a single episode to enter, such as guest actor.

Season three of "The Handmaid's Tale" premiered June 5, 2019 — which was too late for Emmy eligibility that year. Rather than sit the year out though, "they found a loophole," Eng said. They submitted three episodes that had aired in 2018 during the previous season for individual achievement categories, and earned 11 nominations.

When it comes to scheduling, network and streamer executives maintain tight control over the release-date calendar.

"They choose when we go," said Rob Eric, chief creative officer and executive producer of Scout Productions, behind the Emmy-winning reality series "Queer Eye." This year, he has four series premiering right before the deadline.

"We can make suggestions, but really they're in charge of how that rollout looks," he said of the platforms.

Release dates are not always entirely about potential accolades.

“Sometimes a series is released because it’s timely and speaks to what’s happening in the world,” said Tony Phelan, who created “A Small Light” with Joan Rater. The NatGeo series tells the story of Miep Gies, who helped hide Anne Frank and her family.

“It’s in direct response to what’s happening in the world, specifically in America in terms of division and the rise in nationalism and antisemitism,” Phelan said of the show.

Still, to end the show in time for award eligibility, “A Small Light” will release two episodes each week on National Geographic, premiering May 1 and ending May 31.

“How did that happen?” Phelan asked in mock surprise of the reason behind the show’s timeline.

It should be noted that shows released in late summer and fall can still garner attention from awards committees — just a little later. Netflix dropped all nine episodes of “Squid Game” in September 2021 — and it was still nominated for last year’s Emmy Awards, including best drama series. Lee Jung-jae also won best actor in a drama series, making history as the first person to win in the drama category for a non-English speaking role.

The critically acclaimed and popular series “The Bear” debuted its first season last June, but it was too late for the 2022 Emmy Awards. By premiering in the summer though, the Hulu show shined and wasn’t drowned out by competitors. And the Emmy Awards aren’t everything: Star Jeremy Allen White cleaned









up at the Golden Globes, where he won best actor in a musical or comedy series.

“There are just so many shows, so many streaming services, and people don’t have the time,” Eng said. “From the studio and network standpoint, maybe you should pull something like ‘The Bear’ and drop it in the summer and build that momentum because that was a word-of-mouth hit.”

Still, some award shows reign supreme.

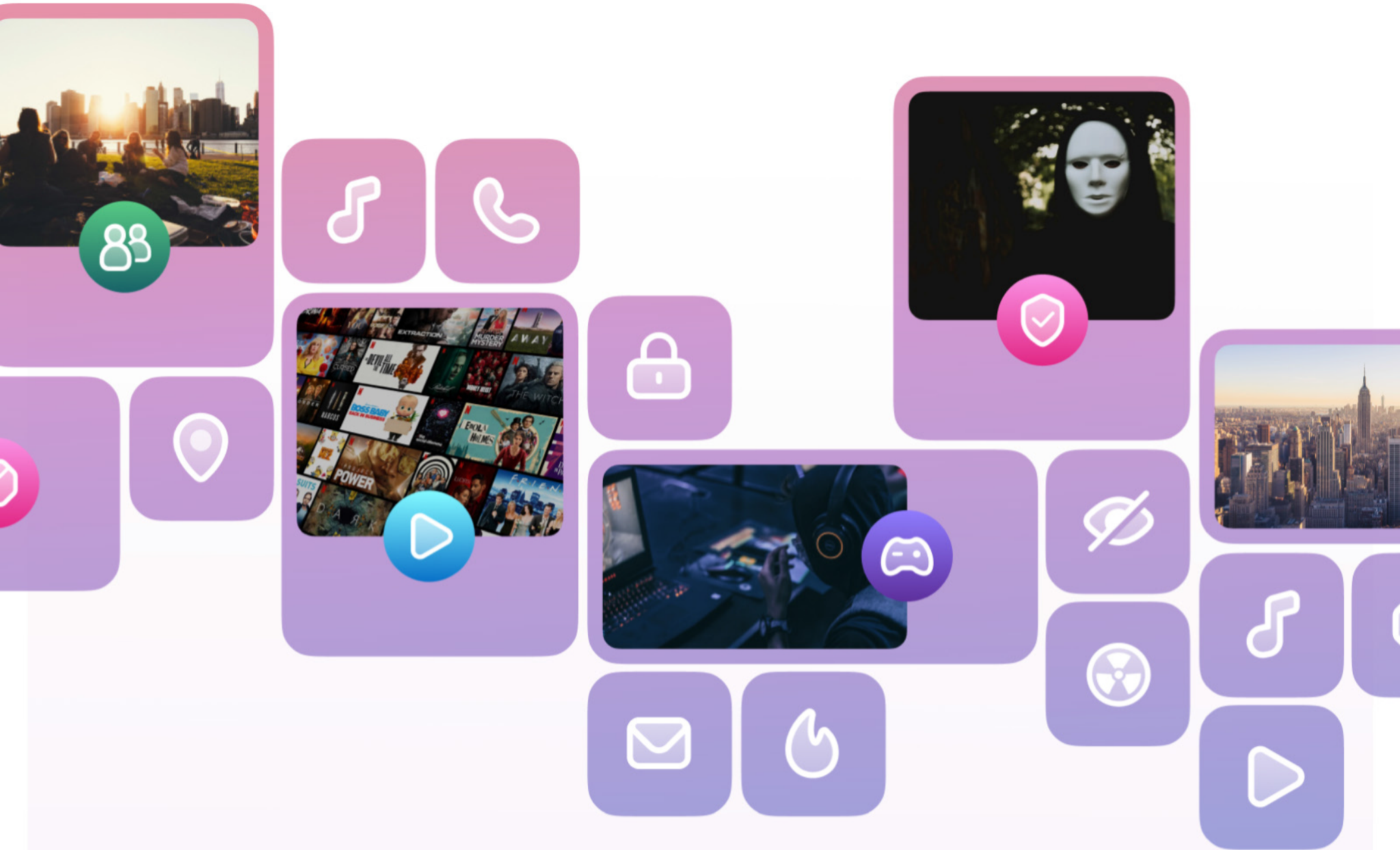
Eric Korsh, the president of Scout Productions, distilled the value of award recognition: The Emmys, he said, “are about defining the best in television.”







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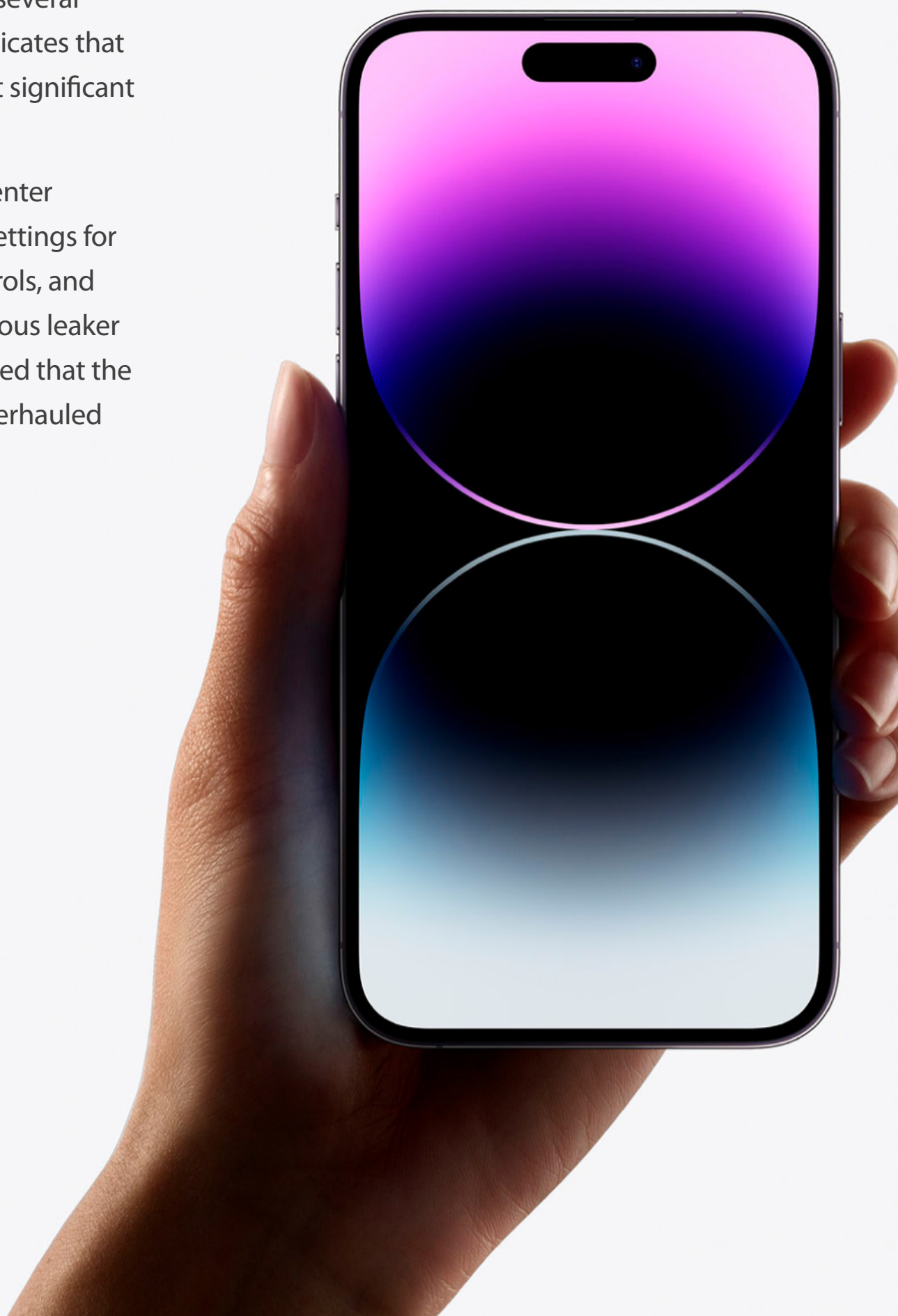




Apple's Control Center is reportedly set for a significant overhaul with iOS 17, expected to be unveiled at WWDC 2023 in June. This will mark the first major redesign since iOS 11 in 2017.

Apple enthusiasts are eagerly awaiting the Worldwide Developers Conference (WWDC) in June 2023, where the company is anticipated to introduce iOS 17 along with other new software updates. While not much is known about the features of iOS 17, recent reports suggest that the update will include several desirable additions. A new report indicates that the Control Center will receive its first significant redesign in years.

Introduced with iOS 7, the Control Center provides users with quick access to settings for Wi-Fi, cellular, Bluetooth, media controls, and shortcuts to native apps. An anonymous leaker on the MacRumors Forums has claimed that the Control Center will be completely overhauled in iOS 17.





Although specific details about the Control Center changes have not been disclosed, it is speculated that Apple will allow for increased customization. Currently, users can only rearrange a limited number of Control Center items and add shortcuts from a predetermined list of options.

If these rumors prove accurate, this will be the first time Apple has redesigned the Control Center since iOS 11 in 2017, when it was transformed into a full-screen menu in preparation for the iPhone X launch. The leaker who shared this information also accurately revealed details about the Dynamic Island of the iPhone 14 Pro weeks ahead of its official announcement.



Initially, Bloomberg reported that iOS 17 would be a minor update focused on improving system stability. However, journalist Mark Gurman disclosed last month that Apple had altered its strategy, requesting engineers to incorporate features highly requested by iPhone and iPad users.

Unconfirmed by the company, there are speculations that Apple may cease support for iPhone 8, iPhone X, and the first-generation iPad Pro with iOS 17 and iPadOS 17.

WWDC 2023 is also expected to showcase other major OS versions, including watchOS 10, tvOS 17, and macOS 14. The conference may also feature the introduction of Apple's highly anticipated headset project. The event is scheduled to take place from June 5th to June 9th, with a special opening event at Apple Park.





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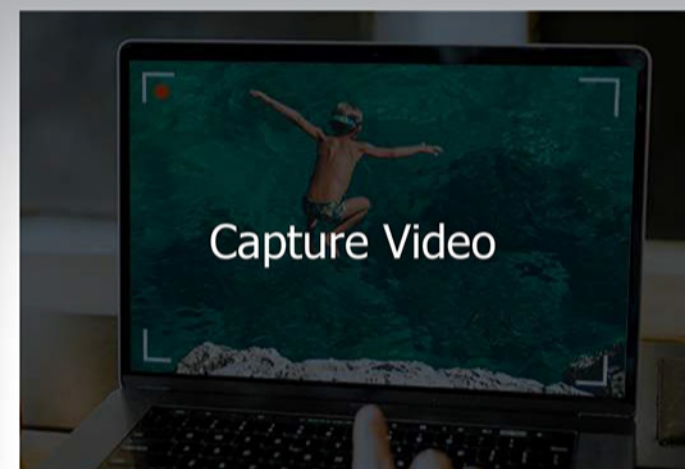
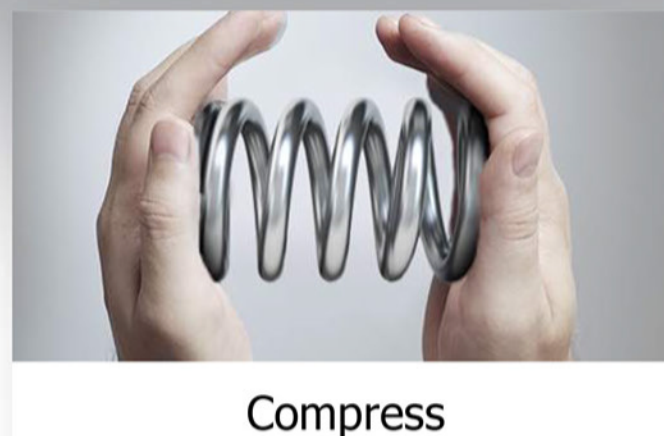
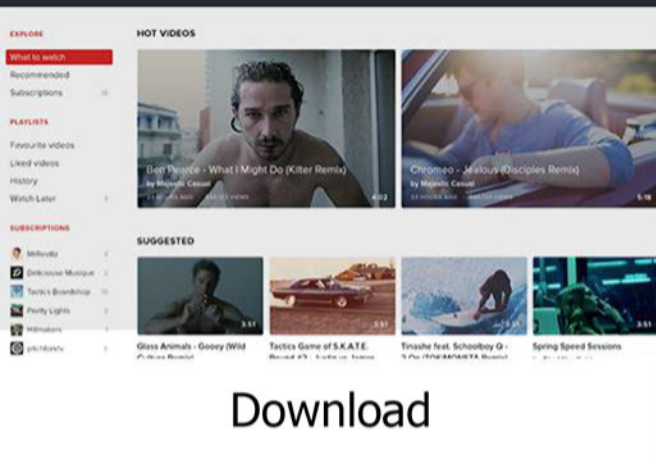
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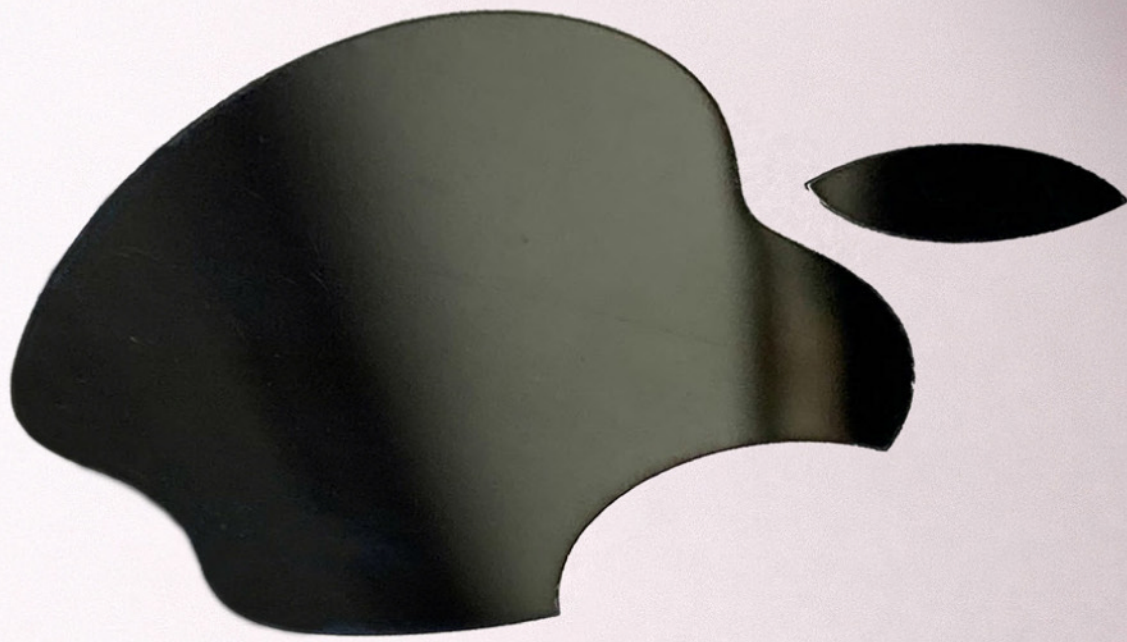
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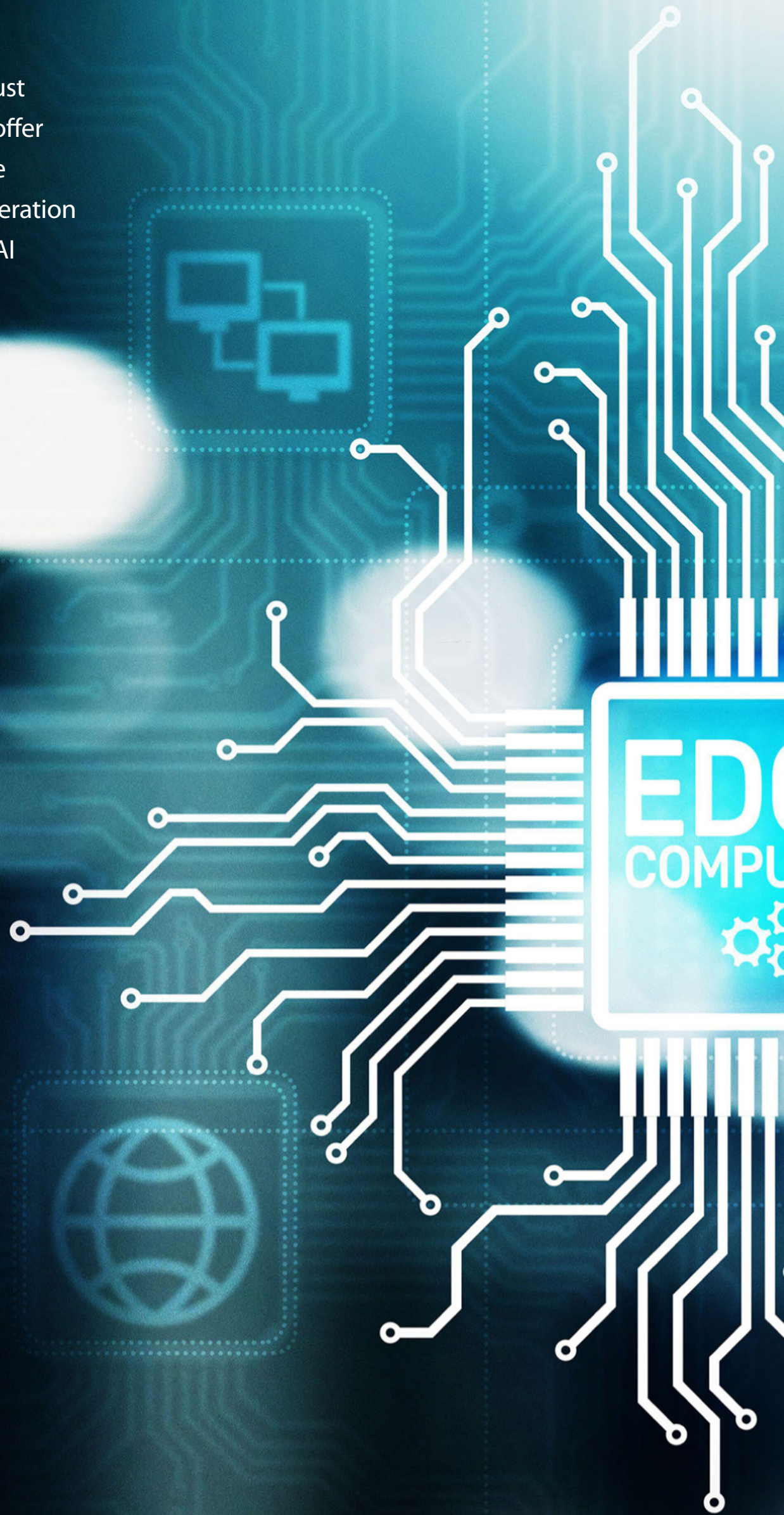
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Next Gen

EDGE COMPUTING: THE NEXT
STEP IN APPLE'S DEVELOPMENT

With tech evolving ever faster, Apple must work harder than ever to compete and offer consumers and businesses cutting-edge software and hardware for the next generation of work and play. Edge computing and AI advancements could be the answer.









APPLE IS ON THE EDGE

The digital revolution has brought us to a point where we are more connected than ever. iPhones, iPads, and MacBooks have become an integral part of our lives, and we rely on them for various tasks, from communication to entertainment, from shopping to learning. However, as we become more dependent on these devices, we realize there are limitations to their capabilities. We need to find ways to maximize their efficiency and processing power. This is where edge computing comes into play. Edge computing is an emerging computing paradigm that refers to a range of networks and devices at or near the user. It involves processing data closer to where it's being generated, enabling processing at greater speeds and volumes, leading to greater action-led results in real-time. Edge computing aims to bring the computing power closer to the end user and **reduce the latency and bandwidth usage of the cloud.**

Edge computing has the potential to transform the way we use technology. It can enable faster, more reliable, and more efficient processing of data, leading to new possibilities in areas such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, and autonomous vehicles. It can also provide better security and privacy by keeping data closer to the user and reducing the need for data to be transmitted over long distances. Apple may well have been at the forefront of technology over the past decade, but it now must work hard to shift toward edge computing. Its Continuity feature, which enables seamless integration between Apple devices, has been a major selling point for its products. Thanks to deep ecosystem



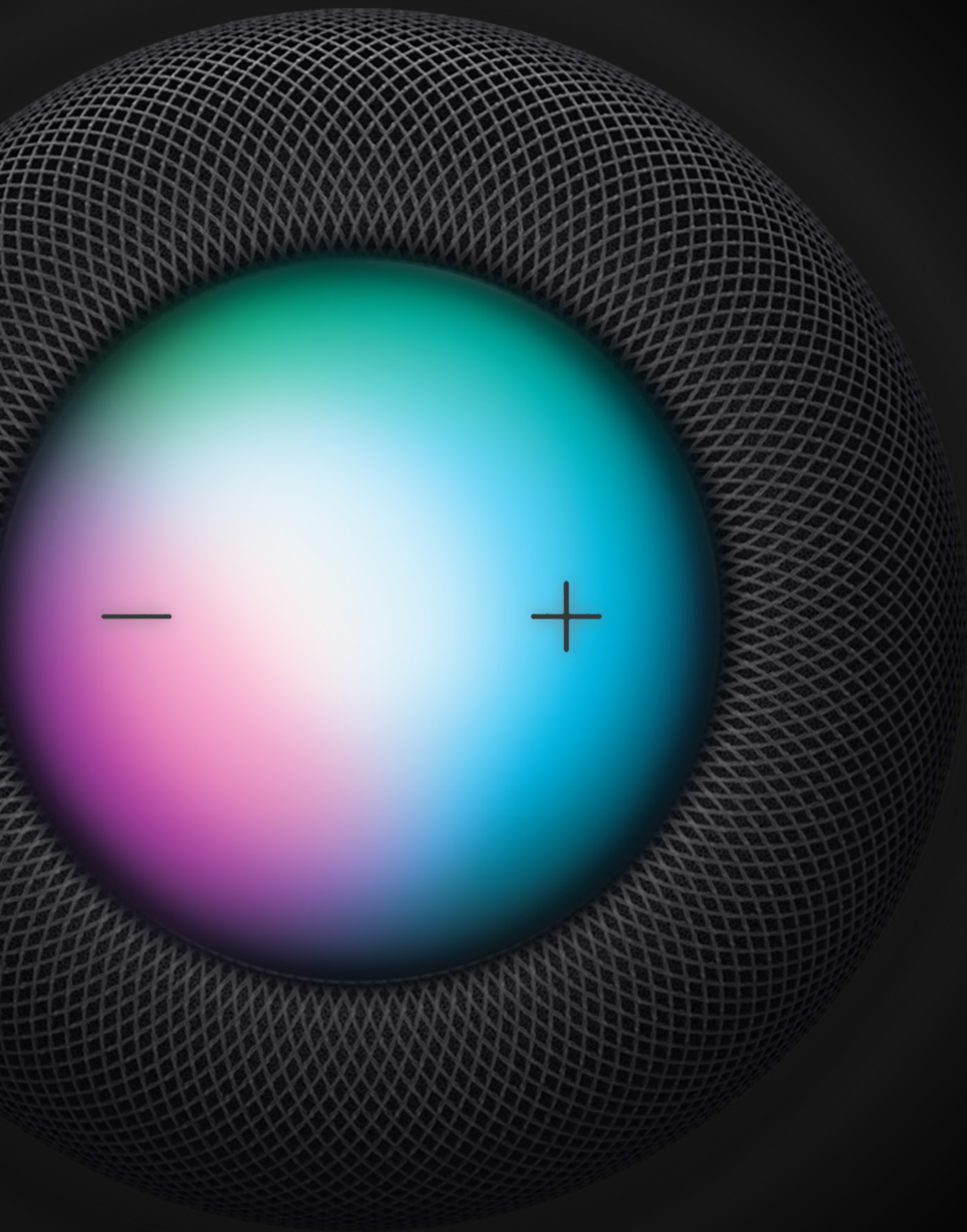


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integration, you can **start a FaceTime call on a Mac and move over to your iPad or iPhone at the tap of a button.** However, this is just the beginning. Apple's ecosystem has the potential to become a single, unified system, with all devices acting as one single artificial assistant and zooming way ahead of its nearest rivals, like Google with its new Bard AI tool and Microsoft and its Bing AI capabilities.

Imagine a world where your Mac, iPhone, iPad, Apple TV, and HomePods work together seamlessly. This is not a distant dream; it's a matter of time. Apple's ecosystem is already closed, which means that it has control over both the hardware and software of its products. This gives Apple a significant advantage over its competitors, as it can optimize the performance of its devices and tailor them to work together seamlessly. Apple has already made significant progress toward this goal, but it's just the beginning. Apple has the potential to take this to the next level by creating a single artificial assistant that can operate across all devices. This would enable users to perform complex tasks seamlessly without switching between devices or applications. For example, you could ask your artificial assistant to find a recipe, and it would search across all your devices and display the results on the device of your choice. Apple's artificial assistant could also leverage the processing power of all your devices, acting as an artificial organism. This would enable it to perform tasks that are currently beyond the capabilities of a single device. For example, it could analyze data from multiple sources and provide insights in real time, or it could perform complex calculations that would require the processing power of various devices.







NEW POSSIBILITIES WITH APPLE'S ECOSYSTEMS

Apple's artificial assistant could also enable new possibilities in healthcare and education. We have seen in recent years just how powerful Apple's technology can be in both areas. Not only has the **Apple Watch saved lives and allowed for in-depth research and study**, but iPads have changed the way young people learn forever. New technologies could enable remote consultations between doctors and patients, with the doctor being able to access medical data from multiple devices. It could also allow new forms of distance learning, with students accessing educational content from various devices and the artificial assistant providing personalized recommendations based on their learning progress. COVID-19 undoubtedly changed how we think about remote learning and health monitoring, and Apple can no doubt use this to its advantage.

Of course, the shift to edge computing and AI will not be without its challenges. There are also potential issues Apple and other companies need to overcome to realize the full potential of edge computing. One of the biggest challenges is security and privacy. Edge computing involves processing data closer to the end-user, meaning there is a greater risk of data breaches and cyber-attacks. Apple needs to ensure that its ecosystem is secure and that user data is protected. In recent years, the Cupertino company has built **a name for itself as the most security-conscious of the big tech companies** running successful marketing campaigns that aim for brands like Google and Facebook.



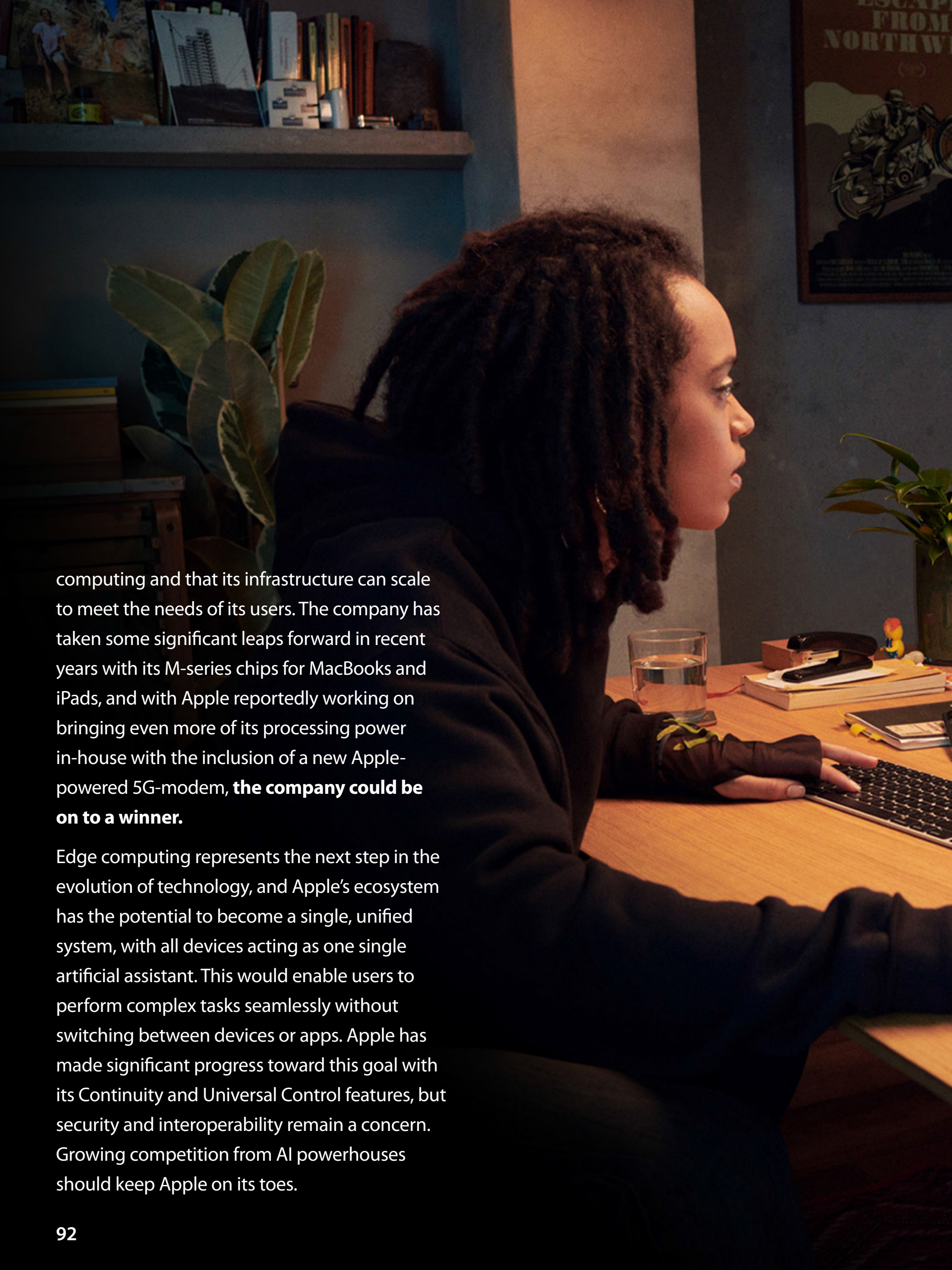




Another challenge is interoperability. Edge computing involves a range of networks and devices that may not be compatible. Apple needs to ensure that its devices can communicate with other devices and networks seamlessly, regardless of the manufacturer or operating system. Sure, consumers locked into iOS, iPadOS, and macOS will immediately benefit, but it's now more important than ever to offer cross-platform support. Apple recently **announced it was adopting the Matter standard for its smart home tech**, but it would need to go much further in order to satisfy consumer and business requirements.

Finally, there is the issue of scalability. Edge computing involves processing data in real time, which requires significant processing power and resources. Apple needs to ensure that its devices can handle the processing demands of edge




A woman with dark dreadlocks is shown in profile, sitting at a wooden desk and looking at a computer screen. She is wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt. The desk is cluttered with a glass of water, a stapler, a small yellow duck figurine, and some papers. A large potted plant is on the left side of the desk, and a smaller one is on the right. In the background, there is a shelf with books and a poster on the wall that says "ESCAPE FROM NORTH W...".

computing and that its infrastructure can scale to meet the needs of its users. The company has taken some significant leaps forward in recent years with its M-series chips for MacBooks and iPads, and with Apple reportedly working on bringing even more of its processing power in-house with the inclusion of a new Apple-powered 5G-modem, **the company could be on to a winner.**

Edge computing represents the next step in the evolution of technology, and Apple's ecosystem has the potential to become a single, unified system, with all devices acting as one single artificial assistant. This would enable users to perform complex tasks seamlessly without switching between devices or apps. Apple has made significant progress toward this goal with its Continuity and Universal Control features, but security and interoperability remain a concern. Growing competition from AI powerhouses should keep Apple on its toes.





With its closed ecosystem and control over hardware and software, the company is well-positioned to lead the way in edge computing and the next step of artificial-assistant tech. With WWDC 2023 just around the corner, we can't wait to see what comes next!





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MUSK SAYS OWNING TWITTER 'PAINFUL' BUT NEEDED TO BE DONE



Billionaire Elon Musk has told the BBC that running Twitter has been “quite painful” but that the social media company is now roughly breaking even after he acquired it late last year.

In an interview also streamed live late Tuesday on Twitter Spaces, Musk discussed his ownership of the online platform, including layoffs, misinformation and his work style.

“It’s not been boring. It’s quite a rollercoaster,” he told the U.K. broadcaster at Twitter’s San Francisco headquarters.

It was a rare chance for a mainstream news outlet to interview Musk, who also owns Tesla and SpaceX. After buying Twitter for \$44 billion last year, Musk’s changes included eliminating the company’s communications department.

Reporters who email the company to seek comment now receive an auto-reply with a poop emoji.





The interview was sometimes tense, with Musk challenging the reporter to back up assertions about rising levels of hate speech on the platform. At other times, Musk laughed at his own jokes, mentioning more than once that he wasn't the CEO but his dog Floki was.

He also revealed that he sometimes sleeps on a couch at Twitter's San Francisco office.

Advertisers who had shunned the platform in the wake of Musk's tumultuous acquisition have mostly returned, the billionaire said, without providing details.

Musk predicted that Twitter could become "cash flow positive" in the current quarter "if current trends continue." Because Twitter is a private company, information about its finances can't be verified.

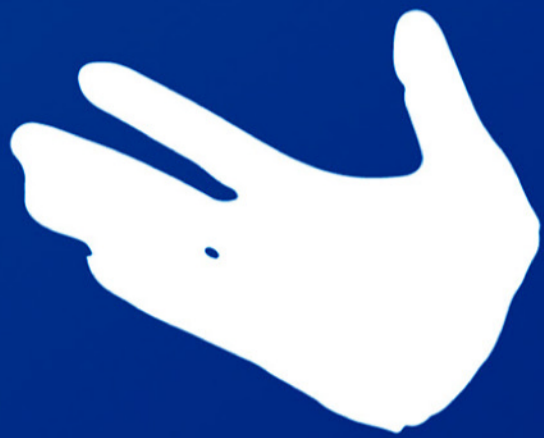






Image: Joshua Lott



After acquiring the platform, Musk carried out mass layoffs as part of cost-cutting efforts. He said Twitter's workforce has been slashed to about 1,500 employees from about 8,000 previously, describing it as something that had to be done.

"It's not fun at all," Musk said. "The company's going to go bankrupt if we don't cut costs immediately. This is not a caring-uncaring situation. It's like if the whole ship sinks, then nobody's got a job."

Asked if he regretted buying the company, he said it was something that "needed to be done."

"The pain level of Twitter has been extremely high. This hasn't been some sort of party," Musk said.

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POLL: 4 IN 10 SAY NEXT VEHICLE MAY BE ELECTRIC

Many Americans aren't yet sold on going electric for their next cars, a new poll shows, with high prices and too few charging stations the main deterrents. About 4 in 10 U.S. adults are at least somewhat likely to switch, but the history-making shift from the country's century-plus love affair with gas-driven vehicles still has a ways to travel.

The poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago shows that the Biden administration's plans to dramatically raise U.S. EV sales could run into resistance from









consumers. Only 8% of U.S. adults say they or someone in their household owns or leases an electric vehicle, and just 8% say their household has a plug-in hybrid vehicle.

Even with tax credits of up to \$7,500 to buy a new EV, it could be difficult to persuade drivers to ditch their gas-burning cars and trucks for vehicles without tailpipe emissions.

Auto companies are investing billions in factories and battery technology in an effort to speed up the switch to EVs to cut pollution and fight climate change. Under a greenhouse gas emissions proposal from the Environmental Protection Agency, about two-thirds of all new vehicle sales could have to be EVs by 2032. President Joe Biden has set a goal that up to half of all new vehicle sales be electric by 2030 to cut emissions and fight climate change.

But only 19% of U.S. adults say it's "very" or "extremely" likely they would purchase an electric vehicle the next time they buy a car, according to the poll, and 22% say it's somewhat likely. About half — 47% — say it's not likely they would go electric.

Six in 10 said the high cost is a major reason they wouldn't and about a quarter cited it as a minor reason. Only 16% said the high cost would not be a factor in rejecting the EV.

New electric vehicles now cost an average of more than \$58,000, according to Kelley Blue Book, a price that's beyond the reach of many U.S. households. (The average vehicle sold in the U.S. costs just under \$46,000.) Tax credits approved under last year's Inflation Reduction Act are designed to bring EV prices down and attract more buyers.

But new rules proposed by the U.S. Treasury Department could result in fewer electric vehicles qualifying for a full \$7,500 federal tax credit later.

Many vehicles will only be eligible for half the full credit, \$3,750, an amount that may not be enough to entice them away from less-costly gasoline-powered vehicles.

About three-quarters say too few charging stations is a reason they wouldn't go electric, including half who call it a major reason. Two-thirds cite a preference for gasoline vehicles as a major or minor reason they won't go electric.

"I'm an internal combustion engine kind of guy," said Robert Piascik, 65, a musician who lives in Westerville, Ohio, a Columbus suburb. "I can't see myself spending a premium to buy something that I don't like as much as the lower-priced option."

Although he has nothing against EVs and would consider buying one as the technology improves and prices fall, Piascik said the shorter traveling range, lack of places to charge and long refueling times would make it harder for him to go on trips.

In his 2017 BMW 3-Series, all he has to do is pull into a gas station and fill up in minutes, Piascik said. "The early adopters have to put up with a lack of infrastructure," he said.

Biden has set a goal of 500,000 EV charging stations nationwide, and \$5 billion from the 2021 infrastructure law has been set aside to install or upgrade chargers along 75,000 miles (120,000 kilometers) of highway from coast to coast.









Electric car giant Tesla will, for the first time, make some of its charging stations available to all U.S. electric vehicles by the end of next year, under a plan announced in February by the White House. The plan to open the nation's largest and most reliable charging network to all drivers is a potential game-changer in promoting EV use, experts say.

High prices and a lack of available chargers are cited by at least half of Democrats and Republicans as main reasons for not buying an EV, but there's a partisan divide in how Americans view electric vehicles. About half of Republicans, 54%, say a preference for gasoline-powered vehicles is a major reason for not buying an EV, while only 29% of Democrats say that.

James Rogers of Sacramento, California, a Democrat who voted for Biden, calls climate change an urgent problem, and he supports Biden's overall approach. Still, he does not own an EV and isn't planning to buy one, saying the price must come down and the charging infrastructure upgraded.

Even with a tax credit that could put the average price for a new EV close to \$50,000, "it's too much" money, said Rogers, 62, a retired customer service representative. He's willing to pay as much as \$42,000 for an EV and hopes the market will soon drive prices down, Rogers said.

In an encouraging finding for EV proponents, the poll shows 55% of adults under 30 say they are at least somewhat likely they will get an electric vehicle next time, as do 49% of adults ages 30 to 44, compared with just 31% of those 45 and older.



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And people in the U.S. do see the benefits to an EV. Saving money on gasoline is the main factor cited by those who want to buy an EV, with about three-quarters of U.S. adults calling it a major or minor reason.

Making an impact on climate change is another big reason many would buy an EV, with 35% saying that reducing their personal impact on the climate is a major reason and 31% saying it's a minor reason.



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ROBOT POLICE DOG RETURNS TO NYPD DESPITE EARLIER CRITICISM







New York City officials unveiled three new high-tech policing devices, including a robotic dog that critics called creepy when it first joined the police pack 2 1/2 years ago.

The new devices, which also include a GPS tracker for stolen cars and a cone-shaped security robot, will be rolled out in a manner that is “transparent, consistent and always done in close collaboration with the people we serve,” said police Commissioner Keechant Sewell, who joined Mayor Eric Adams and other officials at a Times Square press conference where the security robot and the mechanical canine nicknamed Digidog were displayed.

“Digidog is out of the pound,” said Adams, a Democrat and former police officer. “Digidog is now part of the toolkit that we are using.”

The city’s first robot police dog was leased in 2020 by Adams’ predecessor, former Mayor Bill de Blasio, but the city’s contract for the device was cut short after critics derided it as creepy and dystopian.

Adams said he won’t bow to anti-robot dog pressure.

“A few loud people were opposed to it and we took a step back,” the mayor said. “That is not how I operate. I operate on looking at what’s best for the city.”

Adams said the remote-controlled, 70-pound (32-kilogram) Digidog will be deployed in risky situations like hostage standoffs starting this summer.

“If you have a barricaded suspect, if you have someone that’s inside a building that is armed, instead of sending police in there,

you send Digidog in there,” he said. “So these are smart ways of using good technologies.”

The tracking system called StarChase will allow police to launch a GPS tag that will attach itself to a stolen car so that officers can track the vehicle’s location. The New York Police Department’s pilot program for using the system will last 90 days, officials said.

The Autonomous Security Robot, which Adams compared to a Roomba, will be deployed inside the Times Square subway station in a seven-month pilot program starting this summer, police officials said.

The device, used in shopping centers and other locations for several years, will at first be joined by a human partner, police said.

Civil libertarians and police reform advocates questioned the need for the high-tech devices.

“This latest announcement is just the most recent example of how Mayor Adams allows unmitigated overspending of the NYPD’s massively bloated budget,” said Ileana Mendez-Penate, program director of Communities United for Police Reform. “The NYPD is buying robot dogs and other fancy tech while New Yorkers can’t access food stamps because city agencies are short-staffed, and New Yorkers are getting evicted because they can’t access their right to counsel.”

Albert Fox Cahn, executive director of the Surveillance Technology Oversight Project, said: “The NYPD is turning bad science fiction into terrible policing. New York deserves real safety, not a knockoff RoboCop.”





2023 VOLVO XC40 RECHARGE VS. AUDI Q4 E-TRON









With its original e-tron, Audi was one of the first luxury European automakers to offer an electric vehicle. Last year, it expanded its lineup with the more affordable Q4 e-tron. Slotting between two gas-powered models, the smaller Q3 and the larger Q5, the Q4 e-tron is an all-electric compact luxury SUV. It has a lot going for it but it's not the only small European luxury EV vying for your attention. Another top option is the Volvo XC40 Recharge. It's based on the brand's stylish XC40 but is powered by electricity instead of gasoline. Car experts compare them to find out which one is the better buy.

PERFORMANCE & RANGE

Audi offers the Q4 e-tron in two powertrain configurations: a single-motor base version that makes 201 horsepower and a dual-motor all-wheel-drive setup good for 295 horsepower. The latter variant accelerated from 0 to 60 mph in a respectable 5.7 seconds. It also delivered responsive handling and proved to be plenty maneuverable in tight parking lots.

The XC40 Recharge is also agile and tossable, but it has the bonus of being significantly more powerful. The XC40 Recharge is offered in a single impressive configuration: a dual-motor all-wheel-drive layout with 402 horsepower. Not surprisingly, the Volvo was quicker in testing, needing just 4.5 seconds to reach 60 mph. Additionally, the XC40 Recharge offers a full one-pedal driving mode that allows it to come to a stop without the driver touching the brake pedal. In the Audi, you still have to touch the brakes to fully stop.

On paper, the XC40 Recharge's 223-mile battery range is disappointing. The similarly priced









Tesla Model Y Long Range, for example, has an EPA-estimated range of 317 miles. That said, the small Volvo SUV performed better in real-world range tests. A 2021 model with a lower 208-mile EPA estimate managed to travel 240 miles, so you can likely expect a newer one with the higher estimated range to exceed that. A dual-motor Q4 e-tron has an EPA-estimated range of up to 242 miles and was also able to beat that in testing, going 270 miles. The single-motor Q4 e-tron, which hasn't range-tested, offers the most of the group here, with an EPA-estimated 265 miles.

This category comes down to personal preference. The Audi can likely go farther on a single charge, but the Volvo is more entertaining to drive.

Winner: tie

INTERIOR & TECH

The Q4 e-tron's cabin is proof that Audi knows how to design an interior. It's modern and classy with a distinct upscale feel. For the most part, the materials are top-notch, though there are some hard plastics that feel out of place. The wide 11.6-inch central touchscreen is responsive and has menus that are easy to navigate. There's also an available premium audio system tuned by speaker manufacturer Sonos that provides an immersive listening experience.

The XC40 Recharge's interior is cleanly designed with premium touches that are understated but noticeable once you're sitting inside. The seats are comfortable but might not feel luxurious enough for some. The XC40 Recharge uses a Google-based in-car operating system that





integrates many apps like Google Maps, Spotify and the voice-controlled Google Assistant. These features can be pretty handy but require a steady data connection to work at their best.

Both electric SUVs are fairly spacious for their size. The cargo room behind the rear seats is about the same, but one advantage the Volvo enjoys over the Audi is a small front trunk or “frunk” that can fit a small bag or other odds and ends. It’s a close call, but Audi’s interior wins for its poshness and less finicky infotainment setup.

Winner: Audi Q4 e-tron

PRICING & VALUE

The Audi has the lower starting price at \$50,995, but with the base Q4 40 e-tron you have to make do with far less power than the Volvo, which starts around \$55,000. But if you want to load up either model with some of the premium features you’d want in a luxury car, the XC40 tops out for less money. While the Audi Q4 50 e-tron is a closer match in terms of power, it quickly eclipses the XC40 in price and makes less power than its Scandinavian rival.

Warranty coverage is about the same for both, though the Volvo includes two years of free maintenance. Neither qualifies for a federal tax credit under the latest legislation.

Winner: XC40 Recharge Electric

Between these two EVs, we’d pick the XC40 for its quicker acceleration, adequate real-world range, and comfortable and stylish interior. But if your main priority is range, you’d likely be better served by the Q4 e-tron.





BOEING SEES AIRPLANE DELIVERIES JUMP ON RETURN OF THE 787









Boeing reported that deliveries of new jetliners jumped in March, helped by the return of the long-range 787 Dreamliner, as the U.S. aircraft maker edged out European rival Airbus in both deliveries and new orders.

Boeing said it delivered 64 commercial airplanes last month, nearly matching the combined total of January and February. Seven were 787s, which Boeing had been blocked from shipping to airlines for several weeks while U.S. regulators looked into questions about pressure seals in the front of the planes.

Arlington, Virginia-based Boeing has been forced to halt 787 deliveries several times in the last two years because of production and regulatory issues, and last week the Federal Aviation Administration proposed that airlines inspect their 787s for lavatory leaks that could let water seep into electronic equipment.

The bulk of March deliveries — 52 of them — involved the smaller 737 Max jet, including 12 each to Southwest Airlines and United Airlines.

Deliveries are an important source of cash for Boeing, which is trying to bounce back after losing more than \$5 billion last year.

Airbus reported 61 deliveries last month, bringing its total for the year to 127, almost all in its A320 family that competes with Boeing 737s.

Boeing said it took new orders for 60 planes, but orders for 22 others were canceled, leading to a net gain of 38 in March. The largest chunk involved a previously disclosed order of 21 Max jets by Japan Airlines.

Airbus took orders for 20 planes in March but two others were canceled.



Image: Brandon Mowinkel



BIDEN ADMINISTRATION SEEKS INPUT ON AI SAFETY MEASURES

President Joe Biden's administration wants stronger measures to test the safety of artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT before they are publicly released, though it hasn't decided if the government will have a role in doing the vetting.

The U.S. Commerce Department this week said it will spend the next 60 days fielding opinions on the possibility of AI audits, risk assessments and other measures that could ease consumer concerns about these new systems.

“There is a heightened level of concern now, given the pace of innovation, that it needs to happen responsibly,” said Assistant Commerce Secretary Alan Davidson, administrator of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

The NTIA, more of an adviser than a regulator, is seeking feedback about what policies could make commercial AI tools more accountable.

Biden last week said during a meeting with his council of science and technology advisers that tech companies must ensure their products are safe before releasing them to the public.

The Biden administration also last year unveiled a set of far-reaching goals aimed at averting harms caused by the rise of AI systems, but that was before the release of ChatGPT, from San Francisco startup OpenAI, and similar products from Microsoft and Google led to wider awareness of the capabilities of the latest AI tools that can generate human-like passages of text, as well as new images and video.





“These new language models, for example, are really powerful and they do have the potential to generate real harm,” Davidson said in an interview. “We think that these accountability mechanisms could truly help by providing greater trust in the innovation that’s happening.”

The NTIA’s notice leans heavily on requesting comment about “self-regulatory” measures that the companies that build the technology would be likely to lead. That’s a contrast to the European Union, where lawmakers this month are negotiating the passage of new laws that could set strict limits on AI tools depending on how high a risk they pose.





**BUFFETT
SAYS PEOPLE
SHOULDN'T
WORRY ABOUT
BERKSHIRE,
BANKS**





Kiewit



Billionaire Warren Buffett assured investors that Berkshire Hathaway will be fine when he's no longer around to lead the conglomerate.

Buffett said shareholders shouldn't worry about the future of the company after Vice Chairman Greg Abel takes over because he will do a great job and Berkshire will still follow the same model of allowing its subsidiaries to largely run themselves while looking for other companies to buy with the substantial cash reserves it keeps on hand at all times.

"The problem for our board of directors is the day I'm not around and Greg's running it, I am not giving him some envelope that tells him what to do next," Buffett said. But Abel and Berkshire will still be ready to say within minutes whether they are interested in an acquisition and have the resources to do it.

Buffett said Berkshire is "so damn lucky" to have Abel ready to take over as CEO because there aren't many executives like him out there. The 92-year-old has no plans to retire, but Abel has been designated as the successor for several years ever since Buffett's partner Charlie Munger let it slip at the 2021 annual meeting. Abel already oversees all of Berkshire's non-insurance businesses.

Buffett and Abel appeared together Wednesday on CNBC from Tokyo where they went this week to check up on several companies Berkshire invested in there in 2020 and promote the conglomerate Buffett leads.

Wednesday's appearance is the first extended television interview Buffett has done since before the pandemic. Buffett used to regularly appear on the cable network to answer







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questions for three hours at a time several times a year. Buffett and Abel fielded a variety of questions Wednesday, including the recent bank failures and whether railroads, including Berkshire's BNSF railroad, need to continue improving safety in the wake of several recent high-profile derailments.

Buffett said more banks will fail over time, but most people shouldn't worry about it because their money is protected by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.

"We're not over bank failures, but depositors haven't had a crisis," Buffett said. "Banks go bust, but depositors aren't going to be hurt."

There has been an intense focus on improving railroad safety in the wake of the fiery Feb. 3 Norfolk Southern derailment outside East Palestine, Ohio, that prompted evacuations and lingering health concerns after hazardous chemicals were released.

Buffett and Abel said it's impossible to ensure there will be no derailments because of everything that's involved in running a railroad, but the industry is generally getting safer over time, and it will get better now.

"There's no question there's lessons to be learned for the industry as a whole and there's room for improvement," Abel said.

Berkshire owns dozens of businesses besides BNSF, including Geico insurance, a number of large utilities an assortment of manufacturing and retail businesses. It also holds more than \$300 billion of investments, including major stakes in Apple and Coca-Cola.

‘THE SUPER
MARIO BROS.
MOVIE’ IS
OKEY-DOKEY



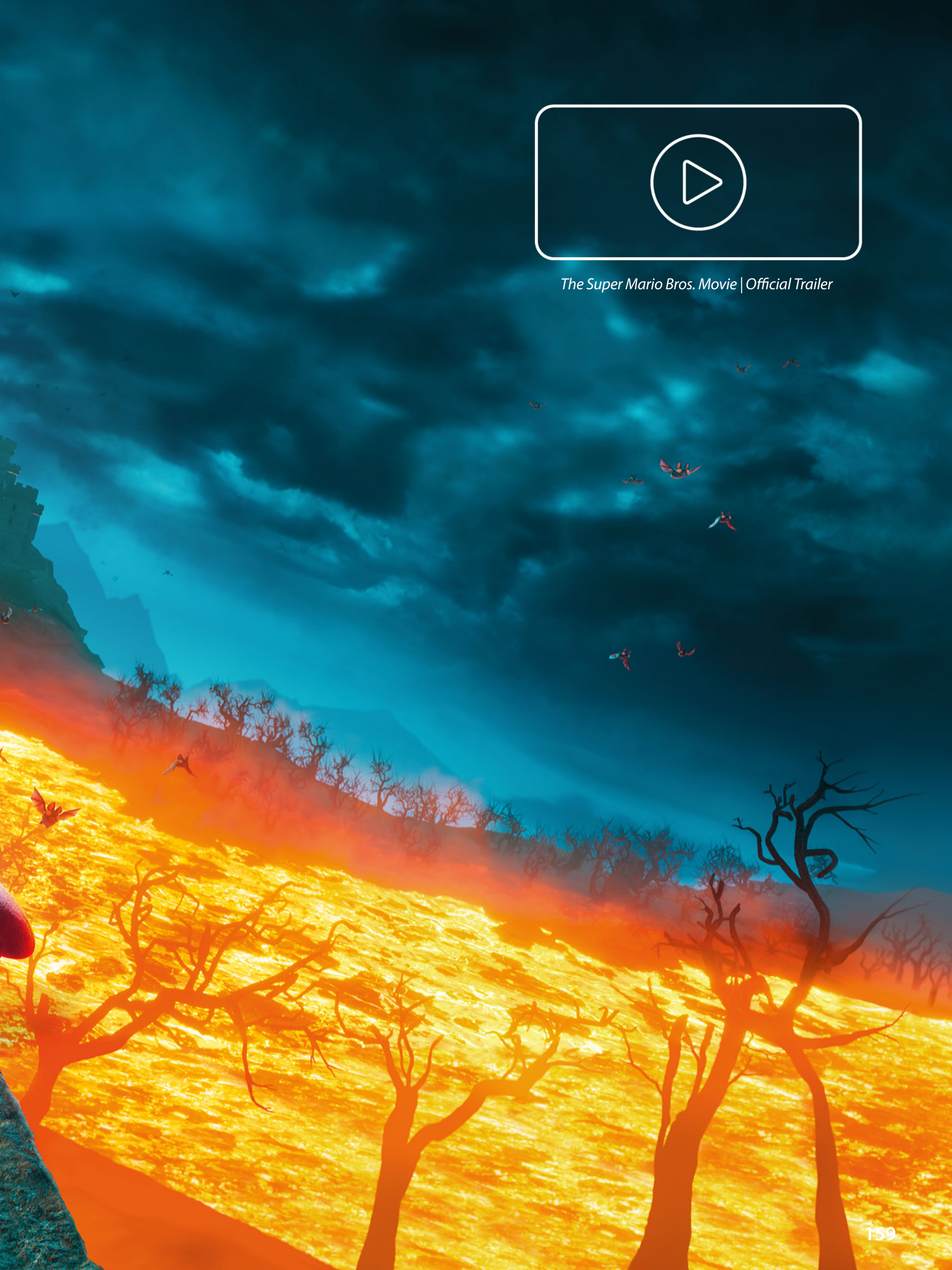
Movies
& *TV Shows*







The Super Mario Bros. Movie | Official Trailer



April is the cruelest month, breeding lilacs out of the dead land, mixing memory and desire, stirring dull roots with spring rain. But it is also, if I check the clock, Mario Time.

“The Super Mario Bros. Movie,” with its vistas of primary colors, is here to brighten our dreary springs, T.S. Eliot be damned. That there is a swell of enthusiasm for a Mario Bros. movie is a once-unthinkable development. The last time Mario hit the big screen was in the little-remembered 1993 live-action film with Bob Hoskins as Mario, John Leguizamo as Luigi and Dennis Hopper(!) as Bowser. Hoskins called the experience “a nightmare.”

But a lot has changed in the three decades since “Super Mario Bros,” the very first video-game adaptation. A once widely derided genre is now a cash cow. “The Last of Us” is a massive success on HBO. Pokémon and “Uncharted” are box-office hits. With Sonic the Hedgehog already two movies in, Mario is playing catch up.

And “The Super Mario Bros. Movie,” which opens in theaters Wednesday, is a spirited and sprightly attempt to race to the front of the pack. A collaboration between legendary video-game designer and Mario creator Shigeru Miyamoto and Illumination founder Chris Meledandri (both producers), it’s a drastically more sincere effort to capture the fun and spirit of the Nintendo game.

And visually, it’s a dream. Directors Aaron Horvath and Michael Jelenic and their animators have rendered the Mario universe with cartoony splendor, matching the game’s ingenious simplicity with a more robust and equally delightful day-glo palate. If part of the appeal of playing “Super Mario Bros.” and its many offshoots







The Super Mario Bros. Movie | Final Trailer







has always been to be immersed in such a sunny imaginary world — plus the bouncy earworm compositions of composer Koji Kondo — the movie has successfully mirrored that mushroom-stomping pleasure. It makes you... want to play Mario.

That's because as nice as it is to look at "The Super Mario Bros. Movie," it's not anywhere near as fun as it would be to play it. It's a-him, Mario, but it's no a-masterpiece. The storyline is only a touch above the interstitial bits of plot you usually get between gameplay. With the exception of Jack Black's grandly lovesick Bowser (he's part Phantom of the Opera, part Meatloaf-styled balladeer), there's nothing here that deepens these characters beyond their usual 2-D adventures. Mario may be a modern-day Mickey Mouse but his kingdom is on the console.

"The Super Mario Bros. Movie" begins much like Spike Lee's "Do the Right Thing": in a Brooklyn pizza parlor. There Mario (Chris Pratt, passable despite the outcry) and Luigi (Charlie Day) are struggling to get their plumbing business off the ground. There are a few moments of stereotypical Italian life — pasta and a big family dinner — before the brothers' attempt to fix a water main break drops them through a portal and into the fantasy realm of the game. (In future Brooklyn-set sequels, Mario will presumably combat waves of strollers and hipsters.)

On the other side, Bowser lords over a Koopa Troop army in scenes that can feel like the most surreal imitation yet of "Triumph of the Will." But while shrinking or enlarging are possible on this other side of the green pipe, there's never any mention of the possibility of lives being lost as Mario makes his way through mushroom patches



*The Super Mario Bros. Movie | Princess Peach
Training Course Clip*

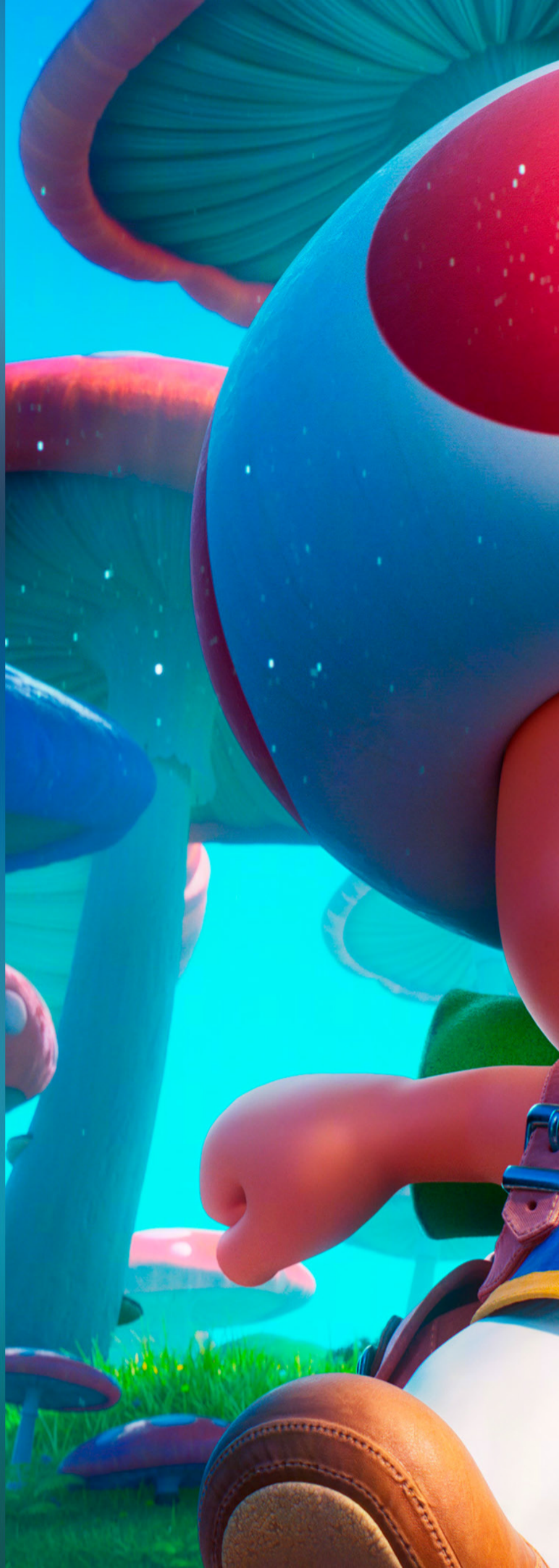


and question-mark boxes. His predicament is just as clear as in the game: He's been separated from Luigi and he must help save Princess Peach (Anya Taylor-Joy) from being forced to wed Bowser.

Game logic often dictates Mario's movements. The shells of the turtle-like Koopas can be slid around like ammo. And choosing a Mario Kart vehicle is just as difficult a decision. Sometimes, the overlap is less consistent. An invincibility star is the most sought-after item in this adventure, greatly exaggerating its typical usefulness. Those things last for like 10 seconds.

None of this is likely to be enough for anyone to exclaim "Oh, yeah!" while hopping up and down and doffing their cap. But it is an hour and a half's worth of superlative marketing that will whet your appetite for more Mario back home on the couch. If anything, the — as Mario would say — "okey dokey" "Super Mario Bros. Movie" only reinforces the distance between two wholly different mediums. It may be game-on for video-game adaptations but the Mario main event is still back on Nintendo.

"The Super Mario Bros. Movie," a Universal Pictures release, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association for action and mild violence. Running time: 92 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.





CISCO STILL FACES CASTE BIAS SUIT; ENGINEERS' CASE DISMISSED

CIS







The California Civil Rights Department has voluntarily dismissed its case alleging caste discrimination against two Cisco engineers, while still keeping alive its litigation against the Silicon Valley tech giant.

The two Cisco supervisors, Sundar Iyer and Ramana Kompella, were accused in the department's lawsuit of discriminating and harassing an employee on the basis of caste – a division of people based on birth or descent. That case was dismissed by an order of the Santa Clara Superior County Court last week. The employee belonged to the Dalit community, a group that is at the bottom rung of the caste system which took root and evolved in India and elsewhere in the subcontinent.

The Civil Rights Department sent a statement on Monday saying the case against Cisco "remains ongoing."

"We will continue to vigorously litigate the matter on behalf of the people of California," it said, adding that it remains committed to "securing relief and ensuring company wide, corrective action."

A Cisco spokesperson declined to comment, citing ongoing litigation.

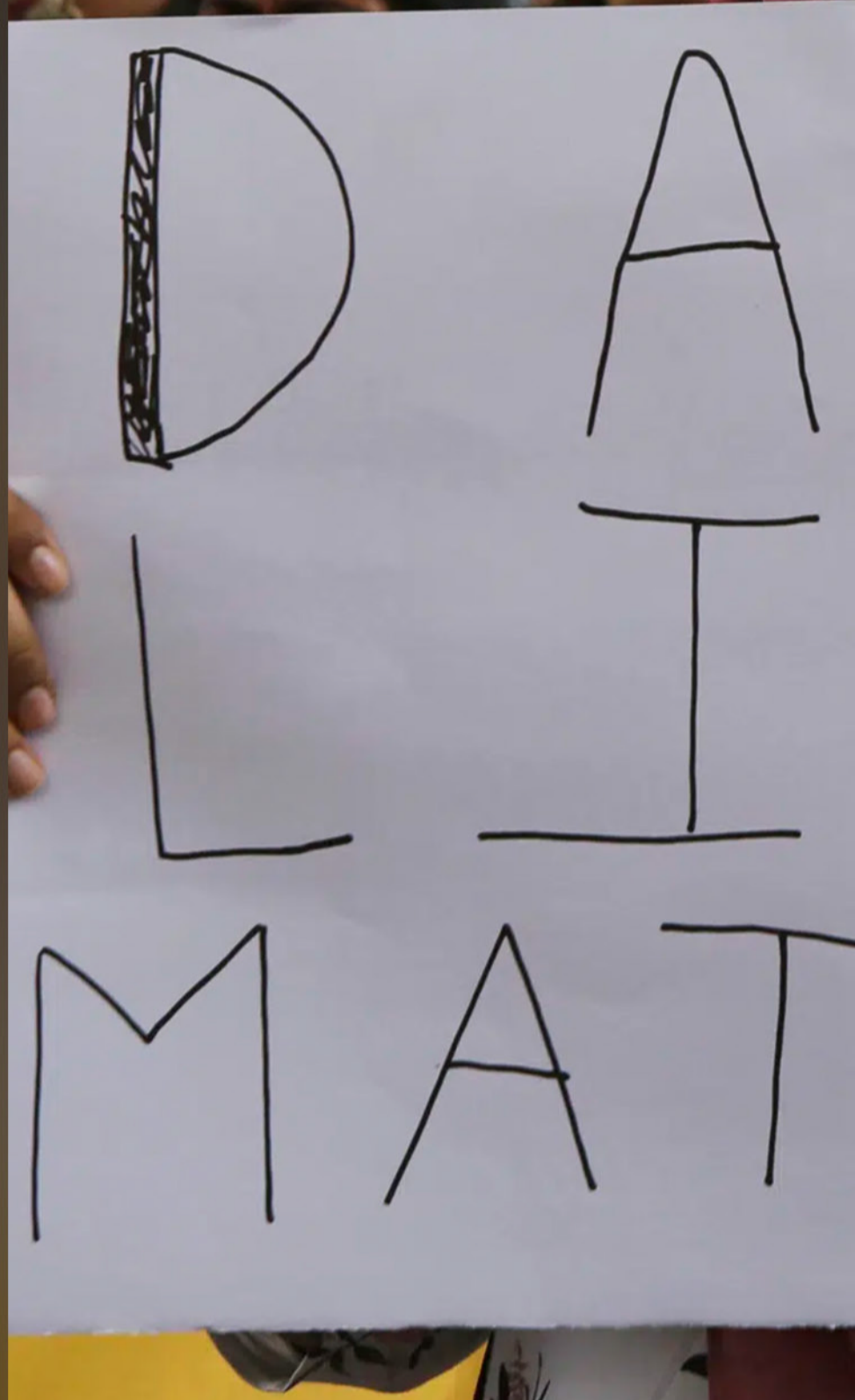
California's lawsuit against Cisco, filed in July 2020, alleges that the Dalit engineer received less pay and fewer opportunities and that the defendants retaliated against him when he opposed "unlawful practices, contrary to the traditional order between the Dalit and higher castes." The engineer worked on a team at Cisco's San Jose headquarters with Indians who all immigrated to the U.S. as adults, and all of whom were of high caste, the lawsuit stated.

The caste system in India and other South Asian countries, as well as the diaspora, places Dalits at the bottom of a social hierarchy. In 1948, a year after independence from British rule, India banned discrimination on the basis of caste, a law that became enshrined in the nation's constitution in 1950.

The lawsuit against Cisco and its engineers fueled a movement against caste discrimination led by groups such as Oakland, California-based Equality Labs. This lawsuit has also been named in groundbreaking actions including the first-in-the-nation ordinance passed by the Seattle City Council in February to include caste in its anti-discrimination laws. Last month, California State Sen. Aisha Wahab proposed a bill, which if it passes, could make the state the first in the nation to outlaw caste-based bias.

The South Asian community has been sharply divided on this issue. Some groups such as Hindus for Human Rights and Hindus for Caste Equity say such a safeguard is necessary to protect vulnerable community members from caste-based discrimination in housing education and the tech sector where many hold key roles. Advocates and other groups say caste discrimination is pervasive in several South Asian communities and the diaspora, across religious lines.

However, other organizations such as the Hindu American Foundation and the Coalition of Hindus of North America oppose such policies arguing that they will specifically target Hindus and Indian Americans who are commonly associated with the caste system.





LIT
LIVES
TTER



These groups also maintain that there is no clear data to show that such discrimination exists, and that caste is covered under “national origin” making it unnecessary to carve out a separate protected category.

The Civil Rights Department voluntarily dismissing its case against the two engineers is a vindication for activists who have held the position that “the state has no right to attribute wrongdoing to Hindu and Indian Americans simply because of their religion or ethnicity,” said Suhag Shukla, executive director of the Hindu American Foundation.

“Two Indian Americans endured a nearly three year nightmare of unending investigations, a brutal online witch hunt and a presumption of guilt in the media,” she said.

Thenmozhi Soundararajan, founder and executive director of Equality Labs, a Dalit-led advocacy group, said last week’s action “does not change anything” including the fact that the Cisco case “has given so many Dalits the courage to come forward with their stories about caste discrimination in education, the medical and tech industries.”

“This is not a loss, but progress,” she said. “The Dalit community owes (the engineer) and the Civil Rights Department gratitude for having the courage to bring such a historic case forward.”

A mediation conference between Cisco and the California Civil Rights Department has been set for May 2.





HOME-BASED WORKERS BECAME YOUNGER, MORE DIVERSE IN PANDEMIC







UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU



People working from home became younger, more diverse, better educated and more likely to move during the worst part of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to survey data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

In many respects, the demographic makeup of people working from home from 2019 to 2021 became more like workers who were commuting, while the share of the U.S. labor force working from home went from 5.7% in 2019 to 17.9% in 2021, as restrictions were implemented to help slow the spread of the virus, according to a report released last week based on American Community Survey data.

"The increase in homebased workers corresponded with a decline in drivers, carpoolers, transit riders, and most other types of commuters," the report said.

The share of people working from home between ages 25 and 34 jumped from 16% to 23% from 2019 to 2021. The share of home-based workers who are Black went from 7.8% to 9.5%, and it went from 5.7% to 9.6% for Asian workers. It remained flat for Hispanic workers, the report said.

The share of home-based workers with a college degree also jumped from just over half to more than two-thirds, and people working from home were more likely to have moved in the past year than commuters.

The two industry groups that saw the greatest jumps in people working from home were in information, where it went from 10.4% to 42%, and finance, insurance and real estate, going from 10.8% to 38.4%. Professional and administrative services, also went from 12.6% to 36.5%.









The smallest gains were in agriculture and mining; entertainment and food services; and armed forces.

While every income level saw jumps in people working from home, those in the highest income bracket were most likely to work from home. While it doubled from 2019 to 2021 for workers in the lowest income bracket, it tripled for those in the highest, the report said.

Home-based work also varied by region. By 2021, it was more prevalent in the West and Northeast, making up about a fifth of the workforce, compared to 16.2% in the South and 15.8% in the Midwest. The variation may have been caused by the availability of Internet access, the cluster of information technology jobs on the coasts and the way people commute, whether by car or public transportation, the report said.

The tech-heavy San Francisco and San Jose metro areas had more than a third of their labor force working from home in 2021 — the largest share among metros with more than 1 million residents.

Since most pandemic restrictions have been lifted since the 2021 survey was taken, it is unknown at this point if the growth in work-from-home is permanent.

“If only temporarily, the COVID-19 pandemic generated a massive shift in the way people in the United States related to their workplace location,” the report said. “With the centrality of work and commuting in American life, the widespread adoption of home-based work was a defining feature of the pandemic era.”

CAN THERAPY HELP MAKE YOU RICHER?







Therapy can help improve your mental health, your stress levels and maybe even your relationship with your mom. It may also help improve your financial situation — a benefit many may not be aware of.

According to 2018 data featured in the European Economic Review, men may expect a 12.4% increase in income from consulting a psychotherapist, while women may expect to see an 8.1% increase in income.

HOW THERAPY CAN INCREASE INCOME

How exactly can therapy help increase your income? Therapy is a tool for healing your mental health, the same way visiting a doctor can heal your physical health.

If you're struggling with your mental health, you may not be able to fully focus on or even prioritize your work. This can make it more difficult to perform well, receive raises or get promoted.

It won't happen overnight, but if you can use therapy to address the root causes of why you struggle financially, or what's making it difficult for you to prioritize your work, you might find yourself making more money or just making smarter financial decisions over time.

"In therapy, people can better understand the barriers that have gotten in their way of being able to manage and grow their own personal finances. And that can then increase their capacity for building wealth," says Traci Williams, a clinical psychologist, certified financial therapist and founder of Healthy Wealthy Roots, based in Atlanta.

Issues that therapy can help with, such as tough romantic or family relationships, can derail you

from your financial goals. If you're struggling with a difficult relationship, and it's affecting your work, therapy could help you solve two problems at once.

Williams says that relationship issues can take up a lot of time and brain capacity, and that resolving those issues frees the individual to focus on work.

"I have seen several women who have been in really difficult relationship situations be able to improve their financial situation by dealing with the relationship problems that they were having," says Williams.

MENTAL ILLNESS AND FINANCIAL WELL-BEING

If you're dealing with mental health issues, prioritizing your financial well-being may be at the very bottom of your to-do list — but ignoring it may cause more immediate and stressful issues.

"One of the symptoms of depression is that you can have sleep issues and you can have difficulties with your energy levels," says Williams. "That can then slow you down, because you may not have the drive or the motivation to keep up with paying all of your bills, so you can end up falling behind on your bills, and that can impact your finances."

If you're dealing with anxiety, you may feel like the highs and lows of the stock market would keep you up at night and so you avoid investing altogether — a mistake that could make you lose out on growing your wealth over time.









Addressing mental health issues may give you back time and emotional bandwidth for tackling those seemingly less important issues, such as creating a budget or saving for retirement.

HOW FINANCIAL THERAPY CAN HELP

If you're not sure working with a psychologist is what you need, but you're still struggling with your money mentality, it might be time to consider a financial therapist. Financial therapy combines behavioral therapy and financial coaching and can help you improve your thoughts and behaviors when it comes to money management.

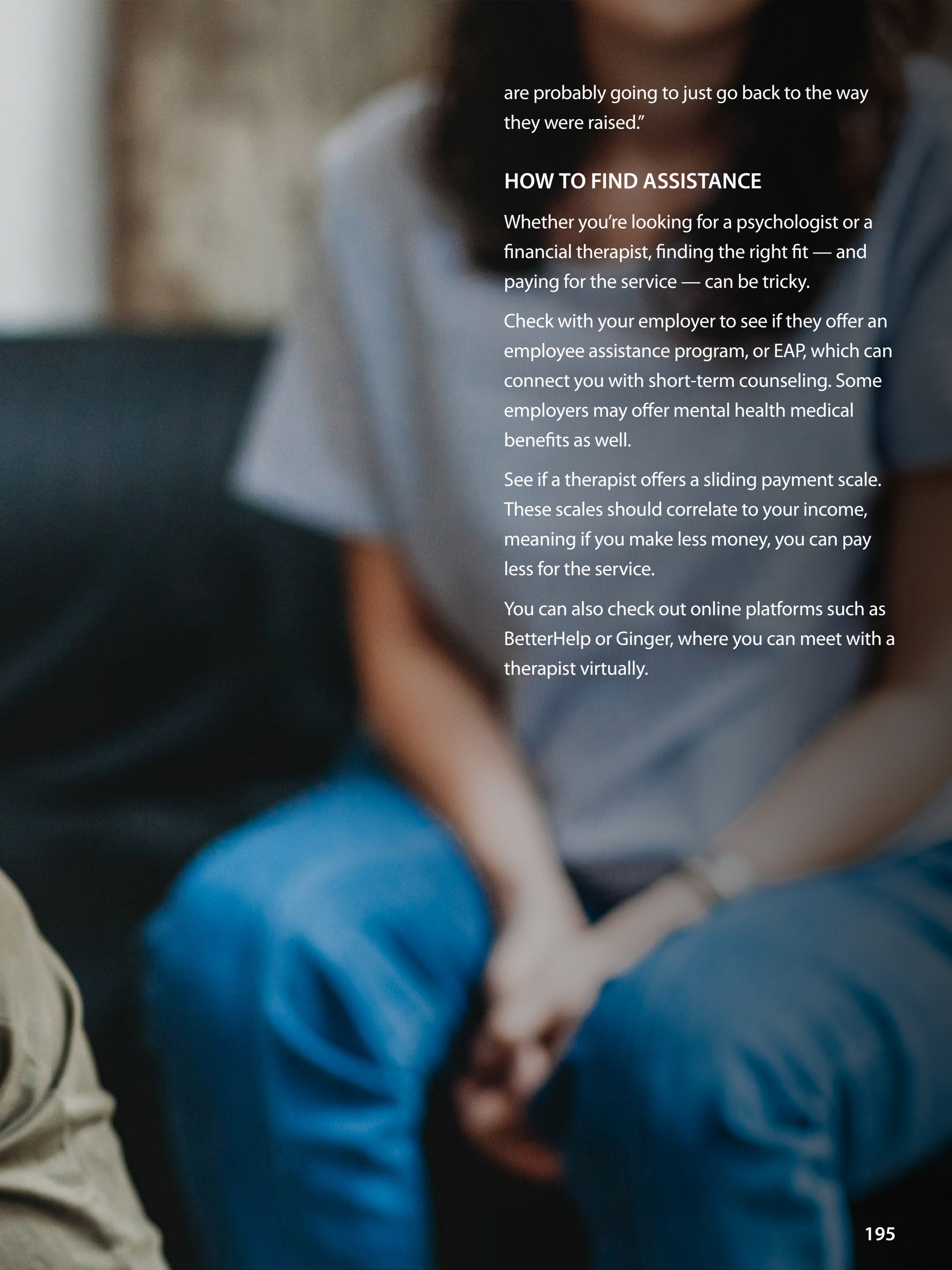
"Financial therapy helps clean up subconscious beliefs around money called money scripts," says Elana Feinsmith, a certified financial planner, certified financial therapist and founder of Oak Financial Coaching in Sunnyvale, California.

"Money scripts often cause people stress and tend to sabotage their financial decisions, so that they stay in a place of lower income and higher debt situations."

These "money scripts" can follow us through life, making it difficult to change our relationship with money. Financial therapy can act as an intervention, helping you voice the difficulties you've had, so you can change your behavior as you move forward.

"We tend to emulate what we were raised with, and so if someone was raised in a community where it was really important to spend money on things that make it look like you have money, they may want to have the nicest car or the nicest clothes," says Feinsmith. "Unless you've gone through financial therapy, some people





are probably going to just go back to the way they were raised.”

HOW TO FIND ASSISTANCE

Whether you’re looking for a psychologist or a financial therapist, finding the right fit — and paying for the service — can be tricky.

Check with your employer to see if they offer an employee assistance program, or EAP, which can connect you with short-term counseling. Some employers may offer mental health medical benefits as well.

See if a therapist offers a sliding payment scale. These scales should correlate to your income, meaning if you make less money, you can pay less for the service.

You can also check out online platforms such as BetterHelp or Ginger, where you can meet with a therapist virtually.

MONEY: HOW TO PROTECT PARENTS FROM FINANCIAL SCAMS

When a scam artist called Cameron Huddleston's mom to tell her to wire money in order to claim a prize, Huddleston had to intercept the calls. Her mom, who had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's, was convinced she had to wire the money as soon as possible.

"That was a wake-up call for me. If you have any cognitive decline, you don't see those red flags anymore," says Huddleston, who lives in Kentucky and is the director of education at Carefull, a service built to protect aging adults' daily finances. She also wrote the book "Mom and Dad, We Need to Talk," on how to have important conversations about money with your parents.



Scam artists often target older adults, partly because they have amassed greater wealth. “If you are thinking from a criminal’s perspective, which target will give you the greatest returns: a broke 20-something who is struggling with student loans or a baby boomer with a couple million dollars of retirement assets?” asks Marti DeLiema, assistant professor of social work at University of Minnesota’s School of Social Work.

According to the Federal Trade Commission , consumers age 60 and older filed 467,340 fraud reports in 2021, reporting total losses of more than \$1 billion. Overall, consumers age 60 and older are less likely to report losing money to fraud than those age 18-59. But when they do report a monetary loss, it tends to be for more money — especially among those 80 and older. They had the highest median loss of all groups, at \$1,500. The FTC reports that older adults are more likely than younger adults to lose money on scams involving tech support, prizes, sweepstakes and lotteries, and family and friend impersonation.

Here are some steps fraud experts suggest taking to protect your parents and other older adults you care about from falling victim.





RAISE THE TOPIC

“Talking about scams can be one of the easier conversations because we’re all targeted,” Huddleston says. And you can use your own experiences or trending news to put it out there in a way that isn’t condescending.

DeLiema says explaining specific scams — such as a stranger reaching out over social media saying they want to be friends then asking for money, or fake text messages claiming to be a grandchild who needs immediate help — can greatly reduce the chances that someone will fall for them. “If you know about the scam first, you’re 80% less likely to respond,” she says.









LEAN ON ANTI-FRAUD TOOLS

A few simple steps can help avert fraud, such as setting phones to send unknown numbers to voicemail, using a credit freeze, and setting stricter privacy controls on social media, says Amy Nofziger, director of fraud victim support for AARP. “These are things we should all be doing,” she says, adding that you can set this up for yourself at the same time.

It’s also relatively easy to sign up for financial account monitoring or to receive alerts for every transaction, Huddleston says. In some cases, it could make sense to allow adult children to also monitor those accounts, depending on the parents’ comfort level and support needs.





FRAUD ALERT



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Legal tools such as a durable power of attorney, a guardianship or a revocable trust can be among the most effective ways to keep an older adult's money safe from scammers, says James Ferraro, a vice president and trust counsel at Argent Trust Company, a wealth management firm headquartered in Ruston, Louisiana.

"If you have funded a revocable trust, then you have a vehicle in place where you can quickly step in if you suspect someone is taking advantage of your parents, be it a fake charity or 'your grandson is in jail in Mexico' scam," he says.

KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

If an older adult is suddenly reluctant to talk about finances, has trouble paying for everyday expenses or has a high number of incoming phone calls or text messages, those are all potential signs of fraud, says John Breyault, vice president of public policy, telecommunications and fraud at the National Consumers League, a nonprofit advocacy group.

Scammers are adept at creating a false sense of urgency, Breyault says, telling their targets that they must send funds immediately or the IRS or other authority will come. "They are incredibly inventive," he adds, noting that methods and techniques are constantly evolving. The FTC reports that scam artists are even using artificial intelligence to mimic voices.

If fraud does occur, help the authorities track and prosecute it by reporting it, Nofziger says. Start by reporting to your local police department and using the FTC's online reporting portal. The AARP Fraud Watch Network Helpline has a toll-free number you can call: 877-908-3360.





AVOID SHAMING

The shame and embarrassment people feel when victimized can make a stressful situation worse.

“Lead the conversation with kindness and empathy, not anger or belittlement,” says Nofziger. “You can say, ‘I’m sorry this happened to you. Together we’ll figure out next steps. There is no problem that we can’t solve or recover from.’”

Reassuring words that can keep older adults, and their money, safer from scam artists in the future.

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